



SENIOR SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: DICK SCHROEDER **-by Larry Wolfe**

Richard “Dick” Schroeder is a Wisconsin native who was born in Oshkosh, but grew up in Wausau, a city located in the heart of the state, about half way between Eau Claire and Green Bay. Dick graduated from Wausau High School, where he excelled in baseball, football and track for the Lumberjacks. Those who have seen Dick hobbling around on his bum knee the past couple years might be surprised to know that Dick was a pole vaulter and sprinter on the high school track team, specializing in the 100-yard dash and the 220 meter sprint!

Shortly after graduating from high school, Dick married his high school sweetheart, Karen, and they then relocated to Green Bay. Dick and Karen were blessed with four children and fifteen grandchildren during their forty-two year marriage. Sadly, Karen succumbed to cancer in 2004.

When Dick’s children were growing up, he became “coach of the season;” coaching Little League baseball, kids’ football and whatever else was “in season.” One of his sons credits Dick for steering him toward what became his career as a high school baseball coach.

Dick began his professional career with a long stint at the Ft. Howard Paper Company in Green Bay. The Ft. Howard Company later became a part of the Georgia-Pacific Corporation and today it is still one of the largest employers in the Green Bay area. Dick then moved to Wausau where he was a mill worker for a short period prior to purchasing his own farm near the Village of Athens, which is about 28 miles from Wausau. Dick enjoyed his life as a farmer for nearly twenty years before deciding it was time to move somewhere warm. That “somewhere” turned out to be Arizona. Dick and Karen initially moved to the Dobson Ranch community in Mesa where Dick worked in a management position for Pacific Ring Enterprises. Dick was then transferred to California for a couple years before

returning to Arizona and Sun Lakes. Dick just recently retired from Robson Communities where he worked in the Maintenance Department for fourteen years. According to Dick, Sun Lakes is the favorite place he has lived “by far.”

Dick has participated in softball for years. He was a standout fast-pitch and slow-pitch player back in Wisconsin, where his fast-pitch team garnered several state titles. Dick hadn't played softball in several years until he moved to Sun Lakes. Then one day he was on the golf course with one Joe Brody, who encouraged him to get back into softball. (Joe hasn't played for awhile now, but many current Sun Lakes players will remember him as one of the stars of the early Sun Lakes teams.) The rest is, as they say, history. Dick became one of Sun Lakes' top players; he has also played on many Age Group and All-Star teams in the area. Dick's favorite positions are shortstop and second base, because, as he says, “that's where the action is!” His biggest softball thrill occurred in 1997 when the Arizona All-Star team he played with won the AAA 55+ World Series.

As a Wisconsin native, Dick grew up as an avid fan of the Milwaukee Braves and the Green Bay Packers. His favorite Braves players were the middle-of-the-order triumvirate of Hank Aaron, Eddie Mathews and Joe Adcock. Those Braves were NL Champions in 1957 and 1958, winning it all in 1957 when they downed the favored Yankees in an exciting seventh game showdown. Dick's favorite Packer was Hall-of-Fame quarterback Bart Starr. He remains a dedicated “Cheesehead” to this day.

Besides his softball activities, Dick participates in golf and tennis and is an avid reader. He particularly likes books devoted to various periods of history, especially World War II, politics and biographies. Some may be surprised to know that Dick is also an aficionado of classical music, with his favorite composers being Bach and Beethoven. Dick's love of history and “older” music may be attributed to his formal study of History at the University of Wisconsin when he was in his forties. Dick also became interested in computers and software development and has become proficient in programming in HTML and designing websites.

Dick has been slowed down the past few years by his bad knee, but he underwent knee replacement surgery last year and he is now on the road to recovery and should be in good playing shape by the start of the new season. Even though Dick is now 65, he has a one-year-old knee, so don't be surprised when you see that Lumberjack from Wausau sprinting around the bases again!