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**SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: CRAIG THOMPSON
-Larry Wolfe**

Chester, New Hampshire native Craig Thompson grew up in a house originally built in 1737, not long after the town was founded and just five years after the birth of George Washington! Of course, the house had a few upgrades and changes by the time his family lived there! Craig graduated from Pinkerton Academy, a large regional secondary school located in nearby Derry. Like Craig, Astronaut Alan Shepard is a famous alumnus from that school.

Shortly after he graduated, his family relocated to the Kansas City area. Craig says that he then took the “scenic route” to earning a college degree. First, he attended Johnson County (Kansas) Junior College, then Kansas University, finally earning a BS in Nursing at Wichita State University. His journey was lengthened by the fact that he had to work his way through college.

Craig worked as a hospital-based RN in Kansas for three years before transferring to Prescott, AZ. He continued his nursing career there for another seven years before deciding he wanted to change careers. He then went to the University of Colorado School of Dentistry, earning his DDS degree after concluding a four-year program. That was followed by a one-year residency at Phoenix Indian Medical Center. He spent an additional year as a dentist on the White River Apache Reservation before working at Veterans Administration facilities in Prescott and Phoenix.

In 2004 Dr. Craig decided to open his own practice in Peoria, which he affectionately refers to as “Hooterville!” He and his then wife lived in Scottsdale, but he preferred working in a small-town environment. He had a full-service practice, including general and preventive dentistry, oral surgery and endodontics and crown work. He retired in 2017, selling his practice to another dentist.

Craig moved to Sun Lakes in 2022 and soon realized that this “graceful aging” thing was nothing but! And he saw it was absolutely contagious! He joined our softball league in 2023 and hasn’t looked back. He says it really is his fountain of youth, a feeling shared by most of the players. He loves the camaraderie and roots for his and the opposing teams equally. “I’m simply happy to get out there and celebrate our lives together,” he says. He’s also recently got back into tennis, playing at least once a week. He’d previously played intermediate-level singles over his lifetime.

Craig summers with his partner Deborah at his cabin above Mormon Lake, at 7100 ft. elevation in northern Arizona. They love to explore the outdoors and enjoy the cultural offerings in nearby Flagstaff. Much of Craig’s exploring is of the two-wheeled nature, and fast! He enjoys his mountain bike, dirt bikes and BMW road bike. Like his fellow alumnus, Alan Shepard, he loves “flying around,” whether on two wheels or on the softball field.

P. S. Believe it or not, right after this interview, he did fly around the bases after hitting an inside-the-park home run!