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**SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: MIKE OTMAN
-Larry Wolfe**

Sometimes the best laid plans go awry....and sometimes that's a very good thing. That's the case for Mike and Tia Otman. After a successful 33-year career, Mike retired from the Ford Motor Company. The Otmans sold their home in Michigan along with nearly all their furnishings and other "stuff" and bought a large motor home. The plan was to travel the country for three or four years, then decide what to do on a long-term basis. They stopped in Sun Lakes to visit Rick and Deb Ebel who are Michigan snowbirds. And, as they say, the rest is history. Mike and Tia fell in love with Sun Lakes and bought a home here on that trip. The three-to-four-year plan turned into a two-month plan!

Both Mike and Tia are still working part-time: Mike as a consultant for Ford and Tia as a Transplant Center Manager for the University of Michigan's hospital system. But that hasn't kept Mike from playing in

our Sun Lakes softball league. He's been a great addition to the program, hitting a robust .737 last year, sixth in the league. He's also used his extensive umpiring experience to run umpire training clinics for our league. Mike says that he's lucky and honored to be playing in our league. "It's very well run by volunteers and I've already made an incredible number of new friends," he added.

Mike's baseball resume is longer than most people's work resumes. He's been a player, coach, manager, umpire and administrator at many levels. He played two years of college ball before tearing the ulnar collateral ligament in his pitching arm. Unfortunately, this was before so-called "Tommy John surgery" may have fixed it. Mike had been a pro prospect, a flame-thrower who threw a no-hitter in his first college start. But there goes those best laid plans again!

His umpiring career goes back to when he umped Little League games as a 13-year-old. He went on to become one of the top umpires in the Michigan High School Athletic Association and was selected to umpire in several state tournaments. He's also conducted numerous training clinics and served in several administrative positions.

Mike was also very active in the South Lyon (MI) Junior Baseball League, serving in many officer and board positions including President. They've even named a Division of the South Lyon Junior League the Otman Division!

As noted earlier, Mike did have a very successful non-baseball career with Ford and served in various departments including Finance, Production and Engineering. The Otmans have a daughter, Haley, in Michigan and a son, Joe, in Kentucky.

Mike can no longer do one of his favorite hobbies, hosting an annual ice fishing tournament...not many frozen lakes here; however, he likes everything else about AZ.

Mike and Tia's next "best laid plan" includes traveling around the country between softball seasons in their new motor home. I think that plan has a chance!