



DECEMBER 2018

**SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: PAUL GAYER
-Larry Wolfe**

A lankier version of Hall-of-Famer Ted Williams, Paul Gayer has that same sweet swing that connects for both average and power. In his rookie debut in our Sun Division last year, Paul finished third in average (.737), had a 1.069 slugging percentage (a measure of both average and extra-base power) and smashed 17 homeruns. That output earned him our Rookie-of-the-Year Award. Although a first-year player in Sun Lakes, Paul has played ball “forever.” He played fast-pitch on various Air Force service teams, industrial league slow-pitch teams and senior baseball and softball teams. About 25 years ago, Paul took a 15-year “break” from the diamond before resuming play again after retiring in Arizona in 2008. He initially played on various Casa

Grande teams before joining our league last year. He's also a key member of our world champion Ponchos tournament team.

Born in Taylor, Michigan, Paul graduated from John F. Kennedy High but played little sports there. He says his main focuses in high school were on girls and cars, so he spent his spare time working so he could focus on his "priorities!"

After spending four years in the Air Force, primarily as a Military Policeman, with tours of duty in Guam and Korea, he attended Eastern Michigan University. There he met his wife-to-be, Linda. He later attended Henry Ford Community College.

Paul and Linda married in 1973, so Paul went to work full time to support his family which would soon include both a son and daughter. Paul was hired by Detroit Diesel-Allison, which was then a division of General Motors. The company manufactured heavy duty engines and chassis components for commercial trucks and off-road vehicles. Paul's career with Detroit Diesel-Allison would span thirty-years. He worked in various jobs including hi-lo operator and positions in training and quality control. He also served as a Shop Stewart for the UAW for five years. Additionally, he worked part-time in golf course maintenance for over 18 years. That allowed him to play a lot of "free golf."

When the Gayers moved to Arizona, Paul thought he'd be playing a lot more golf. He does still play some; however, softball soon became his sports priority. He does have other interests though, including being a member of a motorcycle club (he owns a Harley-Davidson Heritage Softail Classic), playing tennis twice per week and working out at a fitness club three times per week. Linda joins him on his Harley rides and is a President of a local tennis club.

Paul's main hobby is woodworking; he has a work shop with a full range of tools in his garage. He makes all things wooden, including furniture and cabinets.

At the Field of Dreams Paul comes across as a very quiet and intense player, but in "real life" he's a "softie" and a sentimental family man. Paul says he really loves softball, but his family will always be his number one priority.