



August 2016

SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: JIM LECKNER
-Larry Wolfe

A native of Miller, South Dakota (a small town in the east-central part of the state), Jim Leckner spent many days working on his grandparents' farm as a youngster. He was on Miller High's baseball and wrestling teams and was a member of the Rustlers' state champion boxing squad. Jim actually made the varsity wrestling team as a sixth-grader and was good enough to earn a scholarship to the University of South Dakota. He credits the thousands of acres of hay that he cut and baled for giving him the strength to excel at wrestling and boxing. As a baseball pitcher with an Elroy Face-type forkball, he was also offered a position with a White Sox farm team, but given he was married with a little one on the way, he decided to pursue his education instead.

He later transferred to Northern State University in Aberdeen where he earned his degree in Business Administration and Economics. After graduating, he joined the National Farmers Organization in Sioux Falls followed by a stint with the State of South Dakota as an Internal Auditor. He earned a CPA certificate along the way and had a tax preparation side business for over thirty years. He then spent ten years with T&R Electric Supply as Inventory Control Manager. (Coincidentally his daughter now holds that same position!) After T&R, Jim spent fourteen years with New York Life, mostly on the commercial insurance side of the business, before spending the final eleven years of his career with Rochester Armored Car as their Vault Manager.

Jim and his wife Connie are now “semi-retired.” They were first attracted to Arizona during a Spring Training visit in March of ‘14. They returned in July, bought their house in Oakwood and moved in during October. Connie’s working as a Legal Assistant for a Scottsdale law firm and Jim just got his real estate license last year, so they’re still keeping plenty busy. In their combined families, they have three daughters and one grandchild....so far!

Besides playing softball, Jim’s an accomplished bowler, sporting a 200+ average and both he and Connie are “pool sharks.” In fact, Connie won a South Dakota state championship and placed in the Nationals. Jim says he probably earned more money shooting pool than he did working in his early career!

Although Jim’s a newcomer in our softball league, he’s been involved in some type of baseball-softball “forever.” He played amateur and Legion baseball, fast-pitch and slow-pitch softball (both 16” and standard) and coached many American Legion and amateur teams over the years. He also played on many adult baseball teams, including Amateur World Series teams.

His sports exploits, however, pale in comparison to his victories over cancer. He’s battled four different serious cancers, starting with a malignant tumor at age five and culminating with melanoma recently. He tells his wife and kids, “I never get sick, I get cancer!” Thankfully, he’s now cancer-free and enjoying life to the fullest.