



SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: DOC METCALF

-by Larry Wolfe

Of the 1588 young men who donned a K-O-M uniform, thirty made it to the majors, one made it to the Hall-of-Fame and one became an icon of senior softball. The Hall-of-Famer is Mickey Mantle; the softball icon is Gene “Doc” Metcalf. The Kansas-Oklahoma-Missouri League was a minor league that operated in small towns in those states from 1946-1952 and sent such stars as Mantle, Ralph Terry and the Boyer brothers on to the big leagues. Doc didn’t make it to the majors, but he did produce a grandson that did. Travis Metcalf made his major league debut last season with the Texas Rangers and made one granddad very proud.

Gene was born in Parsons, Kansas, a small town in the southeastern part of the state. He graduated from Parsons High where he played baseball for the Bulldogs. He later graduated from the Cleveland Chiropractic College in Kansas City, where he became *Dr. Metcalf*. Doc practiced as a Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine for about 35 years in Wichita before he and his lovely wife, Vera, retired to Sun Lakes. Actually it was just Doc that retired; Vera is still a successful realtor in the Sun Lakes area.

Doc has played baseball or softball since his youth; besides playing in the K-O-M League, he played semi-pro baseball against teams such as the Indianapolis Clowns and Kansas City Monarchs of the old Negro League and the famous House of David barnstorming team. Doc was one of the early players in Sun Lakes and fondly remembers Jack Landers, Bobby Durbin, Earl Fitzpatrick and Kenny Nelson, who were responsible for making the Sun Lakes Senior Softball League a success. He also cited Ed Robson, who has provided the playing fields and also used to play a pretty mean shortstop himself.

Today Doc is still very active in Senior Softball; he's been a national director of Senior Softball-USA for ten years. The SSUSA is the world's largest organization of senior softball players; it conducts the Senior Softball World Championship tournaments and is the national governing body for senior softball play. As a player, Doc has earned five World Championship rings in Age Group play. He also continues to play in the Sun Lakes league and on the 70+ Travel Team.

When asked about his best sports-related memories, Doc mentioned several. One involved attending the 1948 All Star Game at old Sportsmen's Park in St. Louis, where he got autographs on his program from such stars as Andy Pafko, Stan Musial, Harry "The Cat" Brecheen and Ted Williams. However, he was mortified when his fountain pen dripped ink all over Teddy Ballgame's white uniform pants! He also remembers a round of golf he played with Warren Spahn, the Hall-of-Fame pitcher who played primarily for the Boston and Milwaukee Braves. But his best sports moments involved watching his grandson, Travis, work his way up to the major leagues. Doc is looking forward to more of those "best memories."