



SOFTBALL PLAYER PROFILE: ROGER SPARK

-Larry Wolfe

Roger Spark's life story reads like one of Horatio Alger's dime novels that illustrated how young boys could achieve the American Dream regardless of their place of birth or their family's status. Roger grew up in Yorkville, a working-class neighborhood within the Upper East Side of Manhattan where his father was a hard-working taxi driver and part-time janitor. He remembers living in a flat where his family shared a bathroom with their neighbors. Now jump forward several years and meet DOCTOR Roger Spark, highly-respected Obstetrician and Gynecologist.

After graduating from Taft High School (Bronx), Roger earned a pre-med degree at the City College of New York. He then earned a Masters in Anatomy from the State University of New York, before receiving his MD at Tulane.

Most of Dr. Spark's career was spent in private practice in Goshen, New York, a town in Orange County, fifty miles northwest of NYC. At various times, he was also Chief of Staff and Department Chairman at the Orange County Regional Medical Center and Assistant Professor-OBGYN at New York Medical Center. During his 38-year practice, the good doctor delivered over 4,000 babies! After retiring, Roger became a Hospice Volunteer and was appointed to the State of New York's Office of Medical Professional Conduct by Gov. Pataki.

Roger's love of softball can be traced back to his youth where he was captain of his baseball team, which played in the Manhattan Sports Federation League. As a native New Yorker, he was, and still is, a big Yankees fan, who remembers Tommy "Old Reliable" Henrich, as his favorite player. He's also a fan of the NBA's Knicks and NHL's Rangers. Roger played softball for the Orange County Hospital teams for many years before taking up senior softball in Sun Lakes.

In addition to playing softball, Roger serves on the Senior Softball Association's Board of Directors and on his Temple's Caring Committee, where he provides counsel and comfort to the sick and grieving.

When asked about his best softball memory, Roger cited the time he was playing for his hospital team and while he was stepping up to the plate, a motorcycle came roaring onto the field. It seems one of his patients couldn't wait for him to finish his at bat. He hopped on the back of the motorcycle, arrived at the hospital "just in time," and delivered a healthy baby while wearing his cleats and his hospital scrubs over his softball uniform!

Roger credits his lovely wife, Sandy, with being his pillar of support and understanding during his career. As everyone knows, many times an obstetrician's schedule is dictated by the new momma and baby and can interfere with one's personal life and plans. However, Roger treasures the relationships he had with his many patients, some of who he actually delivered at birth and unfortunately later delivered their eulogy. He considers those long-term relationships the highlight of his successful career. Horatio Alger would have been very proud.....