

SENIOR SOFTBALL

The Only Requirement is to be Young at Heart!



CHARLIE MANDRIK & GEORGIA MANDRIK

Charlie Mandrik, from the Jensen Deep Run area of New Egypt, isn't your typical 76-year-old retiree. Retired from Proctor and Gamble in Staten Island for over twenty-four years, Charlie and his wife Georgia have fifteen children between them, with over forty grandchildren and step-grandchildren, and 24 great grand children. They have a wall dedicated to their whole family with pictures of children, grandchildren, trips and reunions. You can just see it in their face's when they talk about their kids, how much they love their extended family, but family isn't the only thing that brings a smile to Charlie's face. He loves to play softball. He's been playing since he lived in Staten Island and he has never stopped. Charlie plays senior softball and has played in many different leagues that have taken him all over the country.

Of course he brings his wife with him, and together, they have ventured out exploring their surroundings combining a little softball business with pleasure, or maybe that's the other way around, a little pleasure with softball business. Together, they have been to over fifteen states, all in the name of Softball! Charlie has a shirt he wears that reads, "Life begins when the season starts," and his wife's shirt reads, "We interrupt this marriage for softball." "We got to do a lot of sightseeing all over this wonderful country,"

"SENIOR SOFTBALL & MAJOR LEAGUERS"

Phil Rizzuto — Willie Mays

Back in 1991, Phil Rizzuto, the late Yankee icon, was made an honorary member of the NJSSA. Howie Marlin, member of the associations executive board presented "The Scooter" with a Senior Softball T-shirt, and welcomed him into the association.

Rizzuto said he played a lot of softball as a youngster, even commenting, "In fact, it helped me in my baseball career as well". He praised the organization for its efforts to get seniors to play the game. He asked to be put on our mailing list, and looked forward to receiving our newsletter. Phil passed away in 2007.

Another superstar, Willie Mays, the "Say Hey Kid", was also welcomed into the NJSSA as an honorary member, and also given a t-shirt. Mays admitted he, "Hadn't played much softball growing

Georgia stated. "You meet such wonderful people along the way."

He was recently playing on a Toms River team where his games averaged about 175-200 games per year. Charlie is one of the lucky ones because his wife loves going with him to the games. She's not left at home twiddling her thumbs, but loves going on the road with him and their softball family.

Charlie tells of friends of his who play with pacemakers or catchers masks when they are pitching; even some who hobble up the plate and swing the bat, but the one thing that keeps them going is their love for the sport.

In 2005, Charlie played under the National Senior Games Association league and participated in Pittsburgh in the Senior Olympics. He's also played under the SSUSA, senior softball USA Organization that sanctions tournaments all over the country.

Charlie got emotional as he fondly remembered the 1999 Senior Olympics held in Orlando Florida at the Disney Wide World of Sports Campus. He marched in the Citrus Bowl with 250 other New Jersey athletes as they joined 12,000 others participants following the Olympic torch. Charlie has received a bronze medal in 2003 in Virginia, and three gold medals for competition in Louisville, Kentucky, California and Pittsburgh. Charlie wants to make more seniors aware of the fact that no matter at what age, you can still play softball. There are senior softball Leagues available in many local counties at all levels. Come and join Charlie on, "The Field of Dreams," as he and his teammates call it. "If you told us 50 years ago that we would be playing softball at our ages, it would have to be in your dreams," Charlie states.

All the best to you, Charlie. You're an inspiration to other seniors! May you have many more years ahead of you enjoying your games!

By: Pam Tee/Millstone Times



Phil Rizzuto



Willie Mays

Did You Know?

... that New Jersey Senior Softball and Major League Baseball have a strong connection. For many years, Larry Berra, son of the legendary Yankee Hall of Famer Yogi Berra, has been playing senior softball in Union County. He currently plays with the Creative Industries team. Another son of a famous major leaguer is Gil Hodgers, Jr, whose father, Gil Hodgers was the beloved first baseman of the Brooklyn Dodgers, and one of the fabulous "Boys of Summer". Jr. is also playing on the Creative team, and like his father, is a versatile first baseman with a strong resemblance to his Dad. The team holds its annual dinner at the Yogi Berra Museum in Montclair. "Yogi" and his wife Carmen, are there to welcome the players, and their guests to this "End of the Season" event.

... DeRosa's Inducted into Brick Memorial Hall of Fame Veteran softball player, manager and Ocean County Senior Softball President, Pete DeRosa and his wife Barbara were inducted to the Brick Memorial Hall of Fame. It was the first class to be inducted as the school is just 24 years old. Pete was the president of the athletic booster club for 12 years when the organization was started. Pete and Barbara organized all of the fund raisers, oversaw the day to day running of the outdoor and indoor food stands. The club also organized the add book for the football program. They were honored for all the time. and effort they gave to the school. Pete was also been the voice of Mustang football for the past 20 years.