

Larry Rutledge  
Personal Contributor

Many inductees into the Memphis Amateur Athletic Hall of Fame are selected primarily for their performance and dedication to a single sport. However, there are a few who are a “jack of all trades.” Place Larry Rutledge in that category.

Larry was born in Caraway, Arkansas, but he moved to Memphis in the early 1960s and graduated from South Side High School. But his living in the Bluff City is just a small part of what makes Larry a true Memphian.

Larry had a decorated playing career in baseball, bowling, golf and softball, but it’s what he’s done for others on the Memphis sports scene that’s been truly amazing. He served as a field director for the Memphis Park Commission for 15 years. His job was a labor of love, preparing fields for many youth and adults to play their games. In addition, Larry worked with city officials to enhance fields and facilities around Memphis, including reworking batter’s boxes and pitching mounds, building dugout roofs, repairing fences, laying new sod and cutting grass.

He did it all — and then some. One story comes to mind when he led a team of volunteers to refurbish LeMoyné-Owen’s Jessie Turner Park in 2012. The enhancements, which included a new scoreboard, revitalized the historic park. Moreover, Larry was always thinking of ways to help. When Larry heard that the University of Memphis, his alma mater, was getting a new batting cage, he reached out to the UofM to ask if it would donate its old one to LeMoyné-Owen. The UofM did, and Larry picked it up and delivered it. Amazing!

In addition, Larry was TSSAA official for high school girls softball and volleyball and baseball for 15 years. He also called baseball games at the junior college and Division 3 levels.

As a competitor, Larry excelled in bowling, fast-pitch softball and baseball. He bowled in several leagues at Cherokee Lanes, Park Lanes and Billy Hartwick’s from 1980-2008. Larry’s fast-pitch softball career ran for 20 years from 1975-95. He played for and managed several teams that won multiple league and regional championships. Larry’s involvement in baseball went beyond being a player and a manager, as he helped form the Hernando DeSoto League and holds the title of President Emeritus as an honorary lifetime president.

In 1995, Larry was inducted into the Hernando DeSoto League Hall of Fame, and he adds another honor tonight.

Please welcome to the Hall of Fame, as a personal contributor — Larry Rutledge.