

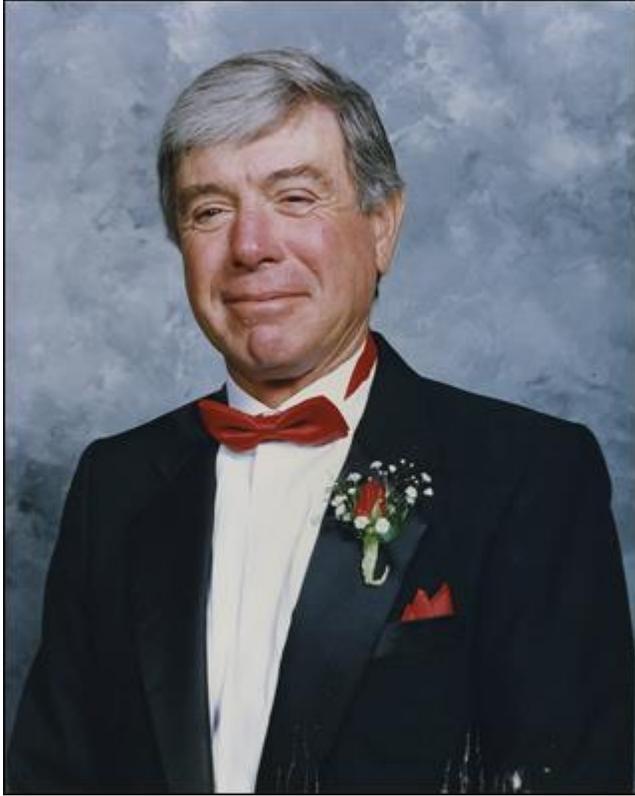
Dick Calvo, Executive Category

It is no surprise that Dick Calvo was selected to be in the first ever Hall of Fame in the Executive category. After all, Dick is one of the founding fathers of USSSA Washington State and continues to be a driving force in the association's rapid growth. In the beginning, Calvo was the Assistant State Director. Appointed State Director in 1982, he watched the association grow from 300 teams in 1982, to close to 3,000 today. Over the years, Dick has been a part of many USSSA Washington firsts; the enactment of slow pitch softball programs for all phases of play from youth to masters; the establishment of a comprehensive tournament guide, the opening of a State office, a premier softball website, the kick-off of a Team Travel Fund, a unique program awarding travel money to top-placing teams and the inauguration of the USSSA Washington State Hall of Fame, a historical project three years in the making. What makes Dick admired by those who deal with him is that he wears many hats comfortably. He has literally been on both sides of the desk and fence. Since 1968 he has coached and managed teams, notably the 1984 'A' World champion Price Enterprises and 1992 'Major' World Series fifth place finishers Varsity Inn/Slo-Pitch News, with Ozzie Boyle. Through USSSA, slow pitch players were introduced to a different kind of game, the kind many players were attracted to. With people like Dick in office, his statement that "USSSA has been good for all softball" is undeniable.



Bob Roach, Special Category

The man, Coach Bob Roach, has been there since the beginning of USSSA softball in the state of Washington. He has worked for the growth and success of slow pitch in the Evergreen State as hard and as long as anyone else and has sought tirelessly to expand USSSA horizons. Bob and a small group of slow pitch devotees set about the business of beginning a new softball association in Washington, and the first step was to explain to participants what USSSA was all about. At the end of the "powwow", USSSA was born in the state of Washington. Bob recruited a team of organizers that he believed would make USSSA a success, including the core group of Dick Calvo and Frank DiTullio. Together they set out to make it work. USSSA Washington has come a long way since its inception in 1980, growing more every year. If Bob Roach worked Wall Street, he would be right up there with Bill Gates in the Fortune 500. Coach Roach has received his riches in softball currency though, and for a man who loves the games as much as he does, that is more than enough.



Bill Ruth, Sponsor Category

Bill Ruth was there since the beginning of USSSA in the state of Washington. When USSSA Washington wasn't even a concept yet, Bill road tripped down to Modesto, California, with the team which he sponsored, played for and managed. In Modesto his team won the divisional title and earned a trip to the USSSA World Championships in North Carolina. Bill, owner of Ruth Realty for the past 35 years, sponsored his first slow pitch softball team back in 1967. What sets Bill apart from many other sponsors is that he not only supports his teams financially but also plays on them and coaches too. "I'm looking for the joy of softball. It's a combination of winning and good times," Bill has said. "People don't remember the scores of games. It's what you did that you remember, the events, the fun and the camaraderie."



Frank DiTullio, Umpire Category

When Frank DiTullio moved from California to Washington, USSSA did not yet exist in the Evergreen State. Bob Roach called on Frank to put together a quality group of umpires in the formative years of slow pitch softball. In 1980 Frank recruited eight umpires, and the USSSA Washington Umpires Association was born. "I held clinics all over the state trying to get things started. In my clinics I tried to impress that the umpire is not a dictator, he is a part of the game. However, he has to maintain control," Frank said. Highlights of Frank's umpiring career include the 1980 'Major' World Series at Concord, California, the 'A' World and a couple of 'B' World Championships. Frank had some exciting moments at the first USSSA tournaments in Washington, like the one at Fort Dent in April 1981. "There was a lot of animosity from the ASA, especially for the guys that came over from the ASA, they got a lot of crap. A lot of ASA umpires watched that tournament looking for flaws, but we were the best."



Liner Flaten, Male Player Category

Liner Flaten represents USSSA Washington State's first generation of upper level players. He played ball with the best Northwest team in recent history, Varsity Inn/Slo-Pitch News, and has been a USSSA Washington State competitor since the organization's inception. Liner sponsored and swung the bat for his next team, West Coast Awards, named after his sporting goods store in Kent, from 1980 to 1983, marking the beginning of his USSSA competition. Liner brought his pitching prowess and people skills to the acclaimed Varsity Inn team (later called Varsity Inn/Slo-Pitch News), which regularly swept state competitions from 1988 onward. In 1990 Varsity Inn took seventh at the 'AA' World in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The following year they placed third at the 'AA' World in San Clemente, California, but the icing on the cake for Liner and the gang was their well earned fifth place at the 1992 'Major' World Series in Daytona Beach, Florida. Liner has been a proponent of USSSA from the start. "I was at the first meeting," he said, referring to the director's meeting of 1983. A Washington 'Major' player in 1992 and 1993, Liner is more than deserving of being inducted into the Hall of Fame. People who have played and worked with Liner in the past all agree that he is a true team player and a generous individual.



Sally Koenig, Female Player Category

When female slow pitch softball players in this state are in need of a role model, they can look to Sally Koenig with confidence. Sally's softball career began when she was a senior at Liberty High School in Issaquah and still continues today. For the past seven years she has played with the competitive women's 'A' team Seattle Express, the women's 'A' National champs in 1991. Besides winning the national tournament in 1991 with Seattle Express, Sally has experienced other high points in her softball career. In 1990, she and 29 other slow pitch playing women from across the country were selected by USSSA to travel to Russia and play exhibition games. Sally says the 30 women formed two "all-star teams." Sally says her personal goals are "to have a family and do things with my daughter." In the softball realm, Sally is "itching" to get to the USSSA World tournament. "I want to win it," she said matter of fact. When asked to compare women to men on the softball diamond, Sally replied with certainty, "I think we're smarter. (We have) more finesse."



Steve Shackett, Manager Category

People's Church has been around for a long time, longer than any other team in the Northern most state of the contiguous United States, and Steve Shackett, along with his brother Owen (Onie), has been there since the beginning. Steve has been with the team since its inception 27 years ago, and since then he's seen his team grow into the nation's most formidable force in the Church division, as well as a team able to more than hold its own in 'A/AA' play. Steve looks for particular qualities in his players, and raw talent is not the most important attribute it takes to become a member of the People's Church squad. He looks for people who can play together, who can win together. He looks for a winning attitude. He looks for compatible people. No matter how talented, the players must fit the scope of the team's program. Though People's Church consistently performs well under Steve's guidance, the two-time world champion doesn't take the credit himself. "It's not just me, it's a corporate effort. Some teams will self destruct because of the people on their team. We've survived by getting people who can work and play together." When pressed for a reason why Steve himself has experienced such phenomenal success, he gives the credit to time. "There are a lot of good slow pitch managers out there. I've just been around for a lot of years, I've got a lot of experience," Steve explained. And now, Steve wants to grab his third Church World Championship. "No other team has ever won three. We want to be the first."



Ed James, Male Player Category

If awards were given for being genuine, Ed James would certainly be first in line to receive one. Ed's entrance into organized slow pitch is about as haphazard as they come. One day a high school buddy called up and asked if he wanted to play softball. James agreed, thinking they would go to some nearby park, swing a few, bat some rounds and go home. In 1980 James took to the road with Mercury Cleaners, which later merged with other sponsors and became the talented conglomerate Mercury/Price/Mellott. Further sponsorship changes led to a name change. In 1984, with Price Enterprises, which was coached by USSSA State Director Dick Calvo, James earned national glory when his club took the USSSA Men's 'A' World Championship title. James admits he was not always a fan of slow pitch softball. What attracted him were the family oriented people and, of course, the honest but friendly competition. There couldn't have been a better way to bring back sweet memories for Ed than to honor him with an induction into the Hall of Fame. James said he was "shocked" when Hall of Fame Chairman Bob Roach called to notify him of his selection.



Andy Bottin, Male Player Category

It all began for Andy Bottin in 1972 when he played for Mercury Cleaners. Andy, no stranger to the bat and ball, played professionally for the New York Yankees organization but had his baseball career cut short by a military trip to Vietnam . Andy's tour in Vietnam ended when he was injured, but after some rehabilitation back in the States, he was ready to play softball. "Watching the emotions of guys who had given their hearts and souls to the game sold me on the game. I enjoyed watching their excitement," Andy said. When Andy started playing softball, he would try to power the ball for distance every time, but since there were no fences then, his opponents just played deeper and deeper with each long ball. When opposing outfielders played too deep for Andy to hit over their heads, he learned versatility. Now you could say that Andy's forte is versatility. He can hit the long ball, but he can also hit for average. Andy played for several teams including Mercury/Price/Mellott, Price Enterprises where they won the 1984 'A' World Championship and was named to the All World Team and ended his career with Varsity Inn/Slo-Pitch News. He was named to several State, National and All Star teams. Andy is truly one of the premier players and individuals to play the game.