



Carl Riedel, Executive/Director Category

In addition to the business he runs, Carl Riedel has been National Director of the USSSA National Mixed Program for the last seven years and has watched its membership grow to 15,000. "I'm going to stick with it until the Mixed World Series is on solid footing," Carl said. He would like to see the membership expand to 20,000. Because of such goals and tenacity with which he pursues them, Carl will likely see the Mixed Program grow in quality, as well as in participatory numbers. Despite this, the honor of his induction hasn't been something for which he's been counting the days. Though honored, Carl doesn't hoard the spotlight. "I think there's a lot more people out there who deserve to be recognized for a lot of time and effort," he said. Together, Carl with his wife Pauli, operate the Lake View Senior Family Home and several snack bars in the Olympia area. They have seven children, two of which participate in the Mixed Program, fifteen grandchildren and two great grandchildren. When Carl does find time for entertainment, he is an avid reader of novels by Tom Clancy and John Grisham. As those books' plots build, so have the National and Washington Mixed programs, much due to Carl's tireless effort.



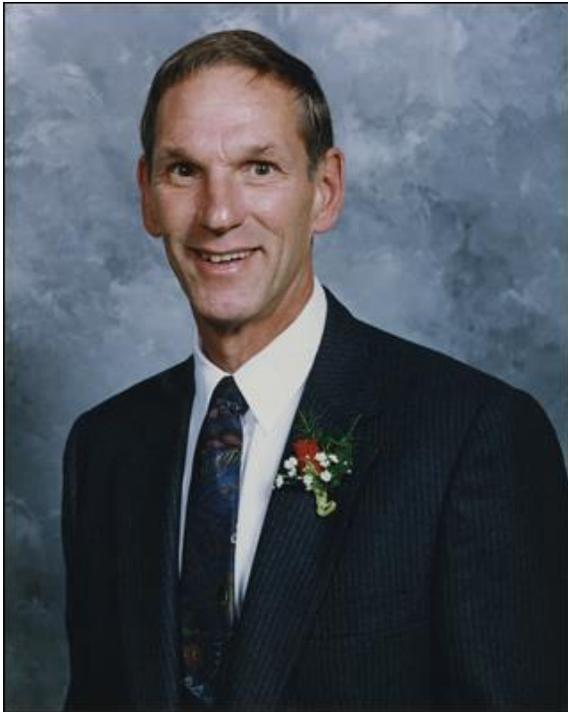
Earl W. Price, Sponsor Category

When Earl Price was a student at Auburn High School in the mid 1930's, he played tennis and high jumped on the track team. But it wasn't until 1972 that he made the leap into the sport of softball. The biggest bound of his athletic life came in 1984 as the sponsor of the Price Enterprises club that won the Men's 'A' World title in Anaheim, California "it was wonderful," Earl said. "We were the only West 'A' team to do that." In his only official USSSA at bat, Earl tallied a base hit he'll never forget. Players on his 'A' World Champion Price Enterprises club will always remember that he batted .1000 as the team's sponsor as well. It figures that Price Enterprises was victorious in the team's most important tournament of its four year existence. The hard work put into the championship title was a reflection of Earl's endeavors in his construction company, Pacific Northern Construction. "All of the players were good," Earl said. But three in particular – Andy Bottin, Ed James and Rich Plante – stood out. "One of the nicest things about our team was that they were all really good players who all got along."



Al Medley, Manager/Coach

If there is any person qualified to motivate a group of people to achieve its peak athletic performance, then Al Medley would be the man. As coach of the Seattle Express Women's 'A' softball club, Al and his players have been blessed with many successes, including the 1992 Women's 'A' National title, earned in Garland, Texas. Al knows a thing or two about optimum performance. In 1968 he played a season on the gridiron with the NFL's Denver Broncos. Prior to that, he spent a season in the Canadian Football League. So it's no secret that during his distinguished football career Al, a tight end, caught several passes. Now, he's catching an abundance of praise. In October, Al was inducted into the coaching category of the USSSA Washington Hall of Fame. He began coaching 20 years ago when a co-worker beckoned him to coach her team while the ordinary coach was ill. "No I didn't really think I was going to coach this long," Al said. He has taken a piece of the Iron Horse's work ethic and instilled it in his team. His philosophy is to set goals and work hard to reach them. Part of working hard is being dedicated, and Al is absorbed with the Seattle Express club. He calls softball a "disease" and spends much of his time in the off season pondering what will be in store for the upcoming season. With that type of loyalty it's easy to see why the Hall of Fame committee decided to select Al. Now he is seeing the fruit of his labor.



Ken Laase, Umpire Category

Ken Laase played at the "Major" level in the late '60's and through most of the '70's. It was during that time that Ken became most knowledgeable of the rules and soon after became an umpire. Ken is one of the original eight umpires that first governed USSSA Washington games in 1980. He and Ed Haugen, a Hall of Fame inductee last year, are the only two still calling games. This year Ken joins Ed Haugen in the "Hall" in the umpire category selection. "I love it," said Ken. "It's fun to watch people participate." But Ken's work isn't complete when the game's over. He is also the assigning secretary for the Western Washington Umpires Association. Assignments are nothing new to the Spanaway, Washington resident. For 28 years Ken was a social studies and math teacher for Franklin Pierce and Washington High Schools.

October 21, 1995 Ken traveled to the Sea-Tac Marriott Hotel to receive the honor of being inducted into the USSSA Washington State Hall of Fame. But in 1990 he crossed the nation for the destination of Greensboro, N.C., where he umpired in the USSSA Men's 'Major' World Series. Ken said, "To be selected (for the World Series) was a real honor." He also umpired the 1987 'A' and 'C' World tournaments. Umpiring softball's upper levels is where Ken enjoys being, although that is where umpires "take a little more static from those guys when you make a call." Ken said he wants to be remembered as an umpire based on his abilities, not his deficiencies. In other words, the calls that were correct. Those types of calls should be plentiful, as the Hall of Fame selection committee's decision indicates. "You have to be in control over the ball game, same as in the classroom," he said, "but you don't want to dominate it."

Larry Foster, Special Category



Larry Foster has lived in Kent his whole life and sports have played a major role in his 46 years. For more than half of that time one sport in particular – softball- has been the biggest. In 27 years of slow pitch in addition to 16 years of the fast pitch version, Larry has put much into the game and now he’s receiving something in return. Larry’s induction into the Hall of Fame is the ultimate return on Washington U-tripper’s investment of time and effort. Larry’s dedication has not only been on the field for teams like Meridian Valley Athletics, a squad he sponsors, and Peoples Church/Worth, but for eight years he has also been director of the Master’s softball program. He is now being inducted into the Special Category. “I felt really pleased and really happy,” Larry said of his induction. “I didn’t get into it (softball) to win any awards; I just got into it to help the program.” Several athletes frequently sample softball as their flavor of choice to continue playing a sport. Larry tried the game as a means of keeping fit and enjoying the camaraderie synonymous with softball teams. “Everybody can play and everybody can have fun,” Larry said. “There are so many different skill levels. One level for which Larry and his Meridian Valley Athletics teammates will be remembered is the ‘D’ classification. In 1991 MeridianValley, now a ‘C’ team, won the Washington Men’s ‘D’ title. Larry remembers the championship as his most memorable slow pitch moment, celebrating with teammates Steve Richardson, Jerry Simpson and Bobby Phillips.

Cathy Percy, Female Player Category



As a high school athlete, Cathy Percy was unable to display her softball skills on the diamond. Back then, which wasn’t that long ago, Cathy 34, attended BellevueHigh School, which didn’t have a softball program. Fortunately, that didn’t entirely sideline Cathy, for she was able to participate in volleyball, track and basketball. In those sports, she utilized her athleticism to the fullest, so the talent to be a stellar softball player was always there. She played softball for the Bellevue Boys and Girls Club; therefore the game was nothing new to her when she joined Peterson’s, a Women’s ‘A’ team (1986-1990) and OMT, the 1991 Women’s ‘B’ Regional Champs.

A second baseman, she is the only woman inducted into this year’s Hall of Fame. But Cathy isn’t exactly an award-recipient neophyte, either. In her senior seasonBellevue, Cathy averaged 16 points per game and earned first team King County honors. For the track team, she threw the discus, claiming second place at state in 1979. But it was her skill on the hardwood that drew Cathy the most praise, receiving a scholarship to the University of Washington.

“I was very happy,” Cathy said of her Hall of Fame induction. “It’s just neat to know that my peers think I deserve that honor.” “I’d like to be remembered as someone who always gave 110 percent, who always supported her teammates and someone they could count on.”



Joe Webb, Male Player Category

Joe's fondest memory as a slo-pitch player is playing in the 1992 "Major" World Series with Slo-Pitch News. "I was kind of in awe," Joe said. "You go up to bat and there's (famous catcher) Bruce Meade right behind you." Though impressed with Meade's stature and seeming omnipresence, it's not like Joe has only spent his entire life adoring the athletic careers of others – he's actually produced quite an impressive line of achievements himself. The latest of which – a softball career of excellence – has etched his name into the USSSA Washington Hall of Fame. Joe, 39, began playing softball in the early 80's with D-bar-G, one of the "me" decade's top Seattle area ball clubs. He also played for Varsity Inn, another solid team, after that. Though playing in a decade that's been described as one of self-indulgence, Joe's attitude is hardly selfish. "That (Hall of Fame) is not what I really ever strived for," Joe said. "I wanted to compete and be respected by my teammates."

Joe was certainly revered by his teammates at FederalWay High School (Washington), where he quarterbacked the Eagles' football team, played point guard in basketball and second base in baseball. So adept as a point guard was Joe, that he played four years in college – two at Tacoma Community College and two at Eastern Washington University – with a red shirt year at the University of Washington sandwiched between. He graduated from Eastern Washington with a bachelor's degree in marketing, but continued playing basketball for Brewster Packing, a men's amateur team that won the AAU national championship in 1982. With so much accomplished in that sport, it only helped Webb in softball. When former Slo-Pitch News teammate Dan Lowery informed him that he was to be a 1995 inductee, Joe said he was greatly surprised. Last year Joe introduced Dan at the Hall of Fame Banquet but this year the two will reverse roles.



Joe Franco, Male Player Category

Joe Franco, a Redmond firefighter, has been burning up the base paths as a member of the Ruth Realty, Pacific Blues and Backstabbers softball teams. His speed has also been visible in the outfield and didn't go unnoticed by the USSSA Washington Hall of Fame selection committee. Joe was inducted into the 1995 Hall of Fame and honored at its banquet, October 21st, at the Sea-Tac Marriott Hotel. With speed that enabled him to turn in a personal best 2:01 in the half-mile and stellar hitting ability that consistently finished between .600 and .700, Joe's induction was inevitable. However, it is more than his obvious athletic ability that stands out. At 48, Joe's longevity while maintaining a high performance level over the years contributed to his induction, too. "I was kind of surprised," Joe said of his immediate reaction to being honored. "I just considered myself a pretty good player."

His wife Patty found Joe – one of the few "good men" – and the couple has been married 11 years. They have two boys – Taylor, 11, and Phil, 7. Joe also has a daughter, Whitney, 22. While his family provides fond memories, slo-pitch softball has also been a memorable part of his life – especially the 1979 Backstabbers and the 1992 Ruth Realty teams. The Backstabbers were 5-11 in league play but refused to lose in the Seattle Metro knockouts, winning several close games and claiming the title. Despite internal problems, the 1992 Ruth Realty squad held together and finished fifth place out of a field of 66 at nationals. "I just love playing on (Bill Ruth) teams," Joe said. "I can't see myself playing for anyone else."



Richard Van Dyk, Male Player Category

Most athletes are lucky to play for their high school teams in their teens, some are fortunate enough to continue as collegiate athletes in their early 20's but almost none get that opportunity later in life. Richard Van Dyk was one of those rare few. At 31 years old, Richard was already married with two children and owned a dairy farm. Despite this, his athletic talent afforded him the chance to play basketball at Centralia College (Washington). "But that (short) three point line increased my stock, sort of," joked Richard. Centralia's coach saw Richard in a men's basketball tournament and asked if he'd like to play for the school. But surely a family man with his own business would not be pried away from those responsibilities, would he? With a couple of selling points, a full ride and the team's scheduled trip to Hawaii, Richard couldn't refuse. "A lot of people said I couldn't do it," said Richard. But he was more than up to the challenge, earning the respect of his younger teammates. For his 1995 athletic achievement, the Peoples Church/Worth infielder reached the holy land for USSSA Washington players; the Hall of Fame. Richard's speed on the basketball court was visible on the diamond, as well. "The first two steps; that's the key (to defense)," he said. No question there is more than a scosh of validity to this method. Twice Richard was selected as the defensive MVP of the Church 'A' World (1982 and 1991). In 1993 he was overall MVP. "Awards are a team thing," he modestly said of his Hall of Fame induction. "If I had been on a loser team, (the induction) probably wouldn't have happened." True, Peoples Church team has been at the apex of the Church World scene, winning the 1991 and 1993 world titles, but much of that pertains to Richard's contributions in the field and at the plate.