



NEWS

Making his mark on history

Softball publicist, historian Bill Plummer to retire after three decades with ASA

By Don Cameron

Bill Plummer III has found life's secret to success:

"I call it the five P's," Plummer said. "You've got to have passion, you've got to have persistence, you've got to have performance, you've got to have people, you've got to have parents."

For the past three decades, Plummer — fueled by his ambition, strong upbringing and love of the game — has forged a legendary career at the Amateur Softball Association of America. Plummer recently announced his retirement from ASA, effective Dec. 31, 2009. The longtime ASA softball historian and current ASA Hall of Fame manager, Plummer will continue to work part time for ASA but will venture into an array of independent projects from his home in Oklahoma City.

"Bill is ASA and we can't thank him enough for his countless hours and dedication to this organization and sport," said ASA Executive Director Ron Radigonda. "The ASA is a better place because of Bill and he is and always will be the true historian of ASA."

Plummer joined the ASA national office in 1979 and also serves as editor of Inside Pitch Newsletter, author, trade show manager and Women's College World Series office pool expert. From 1979 to 1996, he served as ASA's director of public and media relations. Before that, he worked as a sports writer at the Syracuse (N.Y.) Herald-Journal.

From Georgia to Guam, Portland to Prague, Plummer has promoted the sport of

softball to the world. That's softball at every level — men's, women's, fastpitch, slowpitch, armed forces, seniors, amateur, pro.

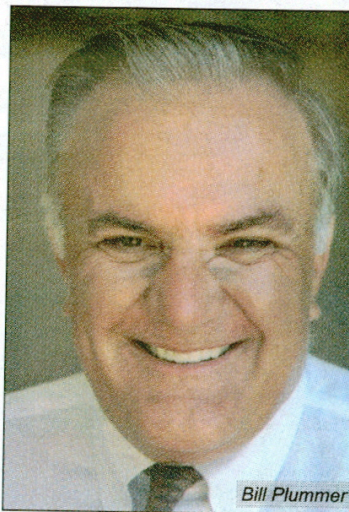
"One of the best things about the sport is the passion of the people who play it, umpire it, officiate it, administer it," Plummer said. "They have an undying love for the sport. The players are not pretentious at all. They love the sport, they love to play the game, are very down-to-earth, very realistic, very genuine."

After graduating from Liverpool (N.Y.) High School in 1962, he served in the Air Force, editing two service newspapers, stringing for Stars and Stripes, handling publicity for the thriving Interservice Softball League based in Guam. He graduated from Indiana University in 1973 and blossomed as a sports reporter and softball columnist in Syracuse.

Plummer was an instrumental part of softball's first foray into the Olympic world, serving as softball information manager at the 1996 Atlanta Games. Dismayed by the IOC's decision to eliminate softball from the sport program, Plummer is optimistic for an October vote that could return women's softball to the Olympics.

"But the sport never should have been taken out in the first place. That was ridiculous," he said. "Softball has done everything it can and then some to be one of the top sports in the Olympics, and it's been proven by attendance, number of tickets sold, et cetera."

Another trip, less heralded by the glo-



Bill Plummer

bal sporting audience than the Olympics, stands out. In 2007, Plummer journeyed to the Czech Republic with the men's fastpitch national team for the ISF World Cup. The U.S. lost to Japan, 2-0, in the title game, but the experience included a stadium christening, autograph sessions and the hosts' tremendous hospitality and enthusiasm for fastpitch. Plummer was more than just a dynamic press chief. He helped the U.S. team overcome the language barrier with much-in-demand translations for the phrase "more beer

please."

"All in all it was a great PR event for the sport, for international softball relations," Plummer recalled. "The weather was good, the people were great, it was a fantastic trip. I'll always hold that number one on my list of trips and places I've been to."

Plummer's experience includes 13 Olympic festivals, a stint as Kansas City Royals baseball scout, softball coach, umpire for 15 years, ASA district commissioner in New York and California, script writer for the TV show "Softball 360," contributor to dozens of sports publications, and author of the 2008 book "The Game America Plays: Celebrating 75 Years of the Amateur Softball Association."

A former baseball player who got his fastpitch start on the diamonds of upstate New York as a catcher, Plummer laments the decline of men's major fastpitch but is encouraged by rising participation numbers in girls softball, women's college fastpitch, senior softball and many slow-pitch circles.

"I've been very fortunate along the way to meet a lot of good people who have helped me and helped move my career forward," Plummer said. "I've been very committed, very dedicated and worked many, many hours helping move the sport forward, promote the sport, write about the sport. Here we are, 30½ years later on the edge of retiring in December. It's been a great ride. It's been a lot of fun."