

BRYN SUZANNE GEERDES - - ROCHESTER/MINNEAPOLIS

Nominated by Char Alexander

When Bryn started playing league softball, she was one of the most feared hitters in the women's league-she was only 13 years old. Outfielders would back up to the fence hoping she would hit a long fly ball, but that was usually not the case. Because of her tremendous speed, Bryn could turn a routine single into a double; and if she was held to a single, she would usually steal a base on the next pitch. Her first coach, Char Alexander (HOF 1997), considers Geerdes "the best women's softball player to come out of Rochester."

At the age of 8, Bryn started playing sandlot ball with the neighborhood boys. She loved the game! When teams were chosen, she was often chosen first, which caused a bit of friction between Bryn and her older brother. On summer days she played until the sun went down. Once when she arrived home after dark her parents "grounded" her from playing softball for 3 days. "Those were the longest 3 days of my life," she said "but I always made sure I got home before dark from that point on."

Bryn attended a small elementary school and in 1966 she began playing outfield for the school's "all boys" softball team. This usually led to controversy when her team would beat the other boy's teams. Even with the limited opportunities for female athletes in those days, Bryn didn't think twice that this was out of the norm.

In 1965, at age 13, Bryn began playing fast pitch softball for the Tropic Bowl in the Rochester Women's League. Although her teammates were much older, her coach Char Alexander gave her a chance. Alexander said "her speed, strength and natural athletic ability made her an obvious centerfielder, where she played her entire career. Even though the ages of the team ranged from 17-35, Susie fit in immediately."

Geerdes was an exceptional outfielder making shoe-string catches look routine. Her tremendous speed allowed her to catch balls that no one else could get to. She led the league in stolen bases. Her hitting prowess allowed her to lead the league in home runs and rank at the top in batting average. She was a very gifted athlete!

Bryn finally got the opportunity to play in her first state tournament in 1968. Prior to this she was not been eligible to play because she was too young. As reported by the local paper: "The team was made up of veteran players including Grace Reichart with over 15 years playing experience and 16 year old Susie Geerdes.

Young Geerdes took full advantage of her first state tournament appearance by hitting 3 home runs in 3 games before her team eliminated. Two years later, in 1970, at the state tournament in Columbia Heights, she was named to the 12 player all state team. In one game she stole 2nd and 3rd on consecutive pitches.

Until 1970, Bryn not only played softball, but was also highly accomplished in track and field. She had hopes of trying out for the Olympics. During one of her league games, a track meet was going on right next to the softball field. Between innings, her teammates remember her changing from her softball cleats into her track shoes, going to the track, running and winning her event, then coming back to play softball. Bryn always struggled trying to decide between softball and track, and in the end she followed what she loved.

While playing in Rochester, her teams had won 6 city titles and she had played in 8 consecutive state tournaments. In 1974 & 1975 she helped her team reach the championship game. The 1975 tournament was the most memorable. Bryn collected 9 hits, scored 9 runs, and drove in 8. Her team had its second runner up finish for the second consecutive year, which at that point, was the highest finish ever for a women's team from Rochester.

In 1976 Bryn moved to Minneapolis and was invited to try out for the Avantis. She made the team and was a mainstay in the outfield for 6 years. In an interview with the Rochester Post Bulletin Hall of Fame, Coach Merlin Woods (Woody) stated: "Sue's an added dimension to our team...that young lady has a wealth of talent...but she has more than talent-she is also a fine person and a natural leader.

While Bryn was with the Avantis, she continued her long ball hitting. At the Adler's Tournament in 1976 she helped lead the Avantis to the championship with 2 home runs in the championship game. Bryn was named to several all tournament teams, played in 5 national tournaments and was named co-captain of the Avantis in 1979. In 1981 Bryn had to give up softball to pursue her professional career. But after 15 years of successfully playing the game she loved so much, she "knew" that dreams do come true! Join us in welcoming one of the very best to ever play the game in Minnesota, Bryn Suzzane Geerdes.