

## **JOE ALEXANDER - - ROCHESTER**

*Nominated by Gary Hasley*

When Char Alexander was inducted into the Minnesota Softball Hall of Fame in 1997, her husband Joe was beside her as he had been for 39 years. For 35 of those 39 years, Char and Joe dedicated themselves to promoting amateur softball in the Rochester, Minnesota community. As pioneers and active advocates for womens' softball, Char states that everything she was able to accomplish for womens' softball was due to the partnership she and Joe had shared.

The growing popularity of slow pitch softball prompted Joe and Char to initiate Adler's slowpitch tournament for women in 1967. Little did they know that their tournament would become a premier event in the state! Eight teams competed in the first tournament and it grew to 36 within 5 years. Hundreds of spectators were on hand to watch the championship games at Rochester's Soldiers Field: such teams as the Avantis, Spooks, Chuckwagon and Patch of Blue competing for the prestigious championship trophy.

Meanwhile, the Alexanders were involved with leadership in other softball endeavors. Earlier, in 1964, they teamed up to organize the Rochester Women's Fast Pitch Softball Association. By 1967, the association had won a bid to host the 1969 women's state tournament in Rochester, the first state tournament to be held in the city.

Those state tournaments were played on fields scattered across the city. Joe's ingenuity and experience in broadcast communications led him to enlist the help of a local ham radio club to relay the information between officials at the various fields. The first radio broadcast of a softball championship game originated from station KWEB at this time, with Joe Alexander behind the microphone doing the play by play.

In 1974, mainly through Joe and Char's innovation and persistence, the formation of Rochester's first fast pitch softball league for girls in grades 4-6 was announced.

In 2003 we lost Joe Alexander unexpectedly. His untimely death claimed him far too soon and many were left to mourn a coach, a mentor, a leader and friend.

When Char was inducted into the Minnesota Hall of Fame in 1997, her heartfelt wish was that he could have been honored with her because he was so much a part their success.

A former player said "One was not complete without the other, much like a pitcher without a catcher. The Hall of Fame honor for Joe Alexander is long overdue. Please join us in welcoming Joe Alexander to the Hall of Fame.