



### Past President's Comments

**Val Lewis-(1984-1990)**

Congratulations to all 2023 SMSBL Hall-of-fame inductees! You have been voted in to a wonderful fraternity of great guys and baseball players. We are honored to welcome you to be part of a great tradition.

**Jerry Karnow-(1991-2002)**

Congratulations to our new 2023 Sacramento MSBL Hall of Fame inductees. You can be very proud joining this highly esteemed class of Hall of Famers. Also, many thanks to all who have supported these deserving men. Again, welcome to all of our member inducted into this years Hall of Fame.

**Jim Lortz-(2004-2008)**

It was an honor and a privilege for me to have been your President for four years. Now as a member of the SMSBL Hall of Fame, I would suggest that each and everyone of you strive for that honor. As for those being inducted, you are as special to this Club as the honors bestowed to you on this special occasion. To the new Hall of Fame inductees, welcome to the Club! It is now our responsibility to maintain and improve The Hall of Fame membership through your input, sponsorship and support. Congratulations!

**Lanny Ropke (2008-2009)**

In 2006, when our league was just 23 years old, we sat down and formed the SMSBL Hall of Fame. Now, as we enter our leagues 40th year, the Hall of Fame is inducting its 17Th class.

We now have over 130 names on the HOF plaque and tonight we add 6 more very special people. Our inductees, their family, and friends, should be very honored to join this exclusive group.

Congratulations to each of you. We hope you enjoy this special night the committee has prepared for you.

I would also like to thank and express gratitude to each member of the HOF committee over the years. They take their responsibilities seriously, reading and analyzing each nomination. Then we research, solicit information, and vet nominees before voting on each one. Each inductee voted in by the committee has earned the respect of the league. So, great work to all the present and past committee members for maintaining a very special association.

**Jim Tygrett-DeNuzzi-(2009-2013, 2014-2015)**

Congratulations to the SMSBL Hall of Fame class of 2023. Each of you represent not only a group of quality ball players but are also recognized for your contributions to the SMSBL and your commitment to our community. I am honored to share your induction into our Hall of Fame and to celebrate with you and your families.

<u>In Memory</u>	<u>Inducted</u>	<u>Last at Bat</u>	<u>In Memory</u>	<u>Inducted</u>	<u>Last at Bat</u>
Ken Papini	2011	2008	Pete Snyder	2019	2018
Dennis Viegas	2011	2011	Larry Donaghey	2022	2019
Dale Hall	2007	2012	Jim Hill	2007	2020
Bobby Alonso	2014	2013	Steven Goggans	2020	2020
Mark Crump	2015	2015	John Daly	2021	2021
Ted Bofinger	2007	2017	Gary Kleinfeldt	2014	2021
Tim Day	2016	2018	Clay Sigg	2008	2022

# The Sacramento Men's Senior Baseball League

Presents

## 2023 Hall-of-Fame Induction



August 26, 2023

## SMSBL President's Message



Congratulations to 2023 HOF Inductees,

It's my honor and a privilege to welcome you into the SMSBL Hall of Fame. You were nominated by your peers and the SMSBL community, and selected via the HOF Committee's ballot. As we complete our 40 year anniversary, we are all fortunate to have such a respected league. The HOF committee chairman Jim Tygrett-DeNuzzi & HOF Event Chair Teena Van Ness have provided a memorable celebration for you and your families to enjoy. Please take a few minutes to recognize the HOF Committee and those who have acknowledged your accomplishments.

I'd like to thank my SMSBL Board members for helping this league stay as elite as it has become. I'd especially like to thank my wife Teena for supporting this league by her work as HOF Event Chair, and chief volunteer at our annual Father Son and Labor Day tournaments. I am proud yet humbled to lead such an outstanding group of League board members and commissioners.

Respectfully,  
Alan Van Ness  
President  
Sacramento Men's Senior Baseball League

To: All 2023 Sacramento MSBL Hall of Fame Inductees

From: Steve Sigler, MSBL National President and Founder

Congratulations on your 2023 Hall of Fame Induction!

Annually, the Sacramento MSBL honors those whose contributions to the league on and off the field are noteworthy. You join an outstanding group and you have helped create a legacy that will continue on for decades.

Hope you enjoy the evening and congratulations again!



### SMSBL HALL OF FAME COMMITTEE

Jim Tygrett-DeNuzzi Chairman, Teena Van Ness HOF Event Chair,  
Val Lewis, Jerry Karnow, Jim Lortz, Lanny Ropke, Ken Chavez, Alan Van Ness,  
Steve Welch, Gary Stonebrook, John Rice, Phil Gelhaus, Scott Stevens

## Steve Cornelius



A native Sacramentan, Steve was introduced to baseball playing sandlot style at his local park. He played Minor and Major divisions at Parkway Little League, making the Major division all star team his last 2 years. Played Babe Ruth for 2 years, then joined Land Park Pony league and was coached by the legendary "Doc" Oliver. Steve attended Luther Burbank High School in Sacramento, playing Jr. Varsity, and Varsity ball. He also was a member of Southside American Legion for 2 years. Steve finished off the first phase of his baseball career playing 2 years of Jr. College ball at Cosumnes River College. After almost a decade of inactivity, Steve was recruited to play in the SMSBL on the 30/over Orioles, whose teammates included future HOF's Gary Stonebrook and Jeff Malm. Many memories were made playing at ballparks like Zupo (great field!) and Kofu (no outfield fence) fields in Lodi, and Harry Renfree off Auburn Blvd (ducking and dodging skunks in the outfield!). But the best memories of that time were the annual trips to Phoenix for the World Series tournament when he didn't realize for years that the Orioles as a team was going against what was essentially other leagues all-star teams in the most competitive division of the age group. Steve joined the Giants 40/over team where he had the privilege of catching former major league pitcher Jim Barr for many games. The best thing about that experience was he almost never called for a specific pitch, he only called for the location, and Barr would throw either a fastball or a slider and he'd hit the target 95% of the time. The best part of his time (still) with the Giants was after the game, where the team would sit in the parking lot, drinking a cold beverage and listening to Jim Barr regale us with stories from his time in the big leagues, and then teammates conducting "Kangaroo Court". On the field Steve's best abilities were his speed, defensive versatility, and ability to make a pitcher throw strikes. Steve has been a member of multiple league and regional tournament champions over the years. As a member of hall of famer Mike Baker's Auburn Braves Steve accomplished the ultimate winning the ring and two MSBL World Series Championships. After 30+ years with SMSBL, his love of the game, respect for his teammates and competitors remain as strong as ever.



### CURRENT SMSBL HOF NOMINATED LIST

George Esposito\*, Mark Fowler, Jim Milligan, Troy Nogosek, Mike Lehtola, Mike Spitek, Frank Smith-Bartucco, Mark McGushin, Rob Ericsson, Lou Abedesco, Mike Wright, Ernie Hook, Mike Wilson, Greg Yardley, Rick Salmeri, Dan Pool, Ever Maldonado, Teena Van Ness, Holly Apblanalp, Danny Hasey, Billy Clouse, Tony Jackson

\*Deceased



## **Chris Ford**

Chris was born and raised in Sacramento California. He was first introduced to baseball at the tender age of 5. Every Saturday he would sit with his dad and watch baseball on their black and white TV enjoying and learning more and more about the game of baseball. His favorite TV sportscaster was Dizzy Dean who was also professional baseball player. At the age of 9 through 12 Chris played little league for Fruitridge Little League. At nine years old he was selected to the minor league and at 10 years old he was then selected to play in the major's until he was twelve. Chris's love for baseball continued as he played Pony League at the age of 13 and 14. During Chris playing time in the Pony League he was selected each year for the all-stars as a catcher.

Chris's baseball career at Hiram Johnson High School unfortunately ended when he was cut in 1966. However, he continued to pursue sports by joining the high school track team. In 1966 as a sophomore Chris broke the school record in the 440-yard dash. In Chris's junior year he also broke the junior school record in the 440-yard dash. His proudest accomplishment was as a senior where he participated in Sacramento Metro League Track Championships whereby, he finished in first place.

Chris went on to then Sacramento City College where he continued his track career. During this time, he helped his relay team take second place in the California State Track and Field Championship. Chris continued his interest in baseball by coaching his son Chris Jr. in Pocket Little League for four years. Chris also coached Pocket Big League baseball for boys 16-18 for two years. Chris's love for baseball allowed him to also coach girls' softball at Kennedy High School for 4 years. He also sponsored and coached a Sacramento City Women's softball team where he won 5 championships.

Chris went on to play men's softball for several years until a friend introduced him to the Sacramento Men's Senior League baseball organization. His first team he played with was the Dodgers in 1987. The following years Chris played for the Cubs, Mets, Solons, Tigers, Yankees, Phillies, Rockies and most recent the 68+ A's team. Chris was known as one of the premier center fielders in the league with the speed and agility to chase down fly balls. A few notable accomplishments include winning the 60+ division championships in 2017 with the Rockies and his participation in the World Series in Phoenix where he won two championships.

Chris's biggest joy in participating in SMSBL games was meeting new people who have become lifelong friends and loving the game of baseball. Chris would like to thank the Hall of Fame committee for selecting him for this honor and to his family who continually supports him in his baseball career.



## **Derrick Rebensdorf**

Derrick grew up in the small California farming community of Easton, south of Fresno. He was a sports fanatic from the moment he could walk. As a child he would go to his uncle's college football games and would later follow him around to watch him as a catcher at his Fast Pitch softball league and tournament games. Derrick wanted to play in organized baseball at the age of 8; however, he was not allowed to play in the Easton community league as the age limit was 9. Derrick's mom and dad signed him up to play in a league in Fresno that accepted 8-year-olds. They transported Derrick back and forth to practices and games that first year and continued to be his biggest supporters throughout his baseball journey.

Derrick followed in his uncle's footsteps as a catcher in his youth and high school years. In Derrick's senior season his team won the Valley championship and finished ranked third in the state. Derrick received All-League and All-Metro honors in his junior and senior seasons and was selected to play in the City-County All Star game his senior year.

## **Derrick Rebensdorf Continued...**

After high school graduation Derrick played baseball at Kings River Community College. Kings River had a need for a 1st Baseman, yes a 1st Baseman, and coach asked Derrick if he would be willing to give it a shot. Derrick agreed and would spend much of his college career at 1st base. He was team MVP in his sophomore season at Kings River.

Derrick was then recruited to play at California State University, Sacramento (Sac State). He was part of Sac State's 1986 Regional Championship baseball team that traveled to Montgomery Alabama and participated in the Division II College World Series, finishing 3rd with a tough semifinal loss to the eventual World Series Champion.

After graduation from Sac State Derrick continued to play baseball, fast pitch softball, and slow pitch softball for various city teams into the late-1990's. Derrick married Michele Lewis in 1993, and they have two children - Jared and Danielle. Once Derrick's children were old enough to start playing sports, he put his ball playing days on hold and turned his attention to coaching his son's and daughter's youth baseball and softball teams. Dave Absher was one of the people that Derrick coached with during this time.

As Derrick's coaching days were winding down, Dave mentioned coming out to a practice with his Sacramento Giants team and that was all it took - Derrick was playing baseball again in 2009 in the SMSBL. He still plays with the Sacramento Giants and Sacramento Royals in the summer and spring leagues. He has also played with the Free Agents on Sundays as well as various tournament teams. Derrick has two World Series rings, one with the Sacramento Giants in 2011, and another with the Sacramento Royals in 2017. He has also been on multiple league and regional tournament championship teams.

Derrick was inducted into the Sac State Baseball Hall of Fame in 2017.



## **Greg Thompson**

Greg was born and raised in Burbank, California, where growing up he and his brothers participated in football, basketball and baseball through youth city leagues. His first year in organized baseball was in 1966 as a T-baller. Greg played baseball into college, and as the fifth man in a four-man rotation he quickly realized he was never going to be paid to play baseball. Soon after high school he began studying emergency medical services. He worked as a paramedic for the Los Angeles Fire Department, and then moved to El Dorado County where he continued in EMS as a firefighter/paramedic with the Georgetown Fire Department.

After a career change in the early 1990s, Greg has been a special education teacher and high school baseball coach. He coached for almost two decades at

Golden Sierra High School and is now coaching at Ponderosa High School. Within these programs Greg has had the opportunity to be a part of two section championships, several league championships, and many playoff appearances. Greg is quite proud of the many players he helped guide who have moved on to coach at the high school and youth levels.

As a member of the Sacramento Men's Senior Baseball League, Greg has been on the Sacramento Orioles roster for over two decades where he has been a member of teams that have won several league championships. Greg was also a member of the father-son tournament team the Capital City Cardinals, where he played alongside his son James and his nephew Emory. The Cards have won the Sacramento Father's Day Tournament as well as a national title at the MSBL World Series in Arizona. Greg was the starting pitcher in the 2009 national title game for the Cards, and he continues to play in the Sacramento MSBL.

Greg has been married to Kim since 1983, and they have two grown children, James and Elizabeth, both special education teachers (and James is the head varsity baseball coach at Monarch High School near Boulder, Colorado). They have three grandchildren, Mason, Cooper, and Margaret Joy.

Greg has been part of the Orioles starting rotation, along with HOF'er Craig Parker, for two plus decades and has been one of the top southpaws in the league. But his pitching doesn't take a back seat to his ability to hit and spray the ball to all fields. Greg is the complete package as a player and teammate.



## Eric Taylor

Eric was born in Oakland, California in 1965. His family moved to Davis in 1973 and that is when his baseball career began. Eric played two years of little league ball in Davis, and three more in Crescent City, California. Those early years were highlighted in 1977 when Eric was a national semi-finalist in the inaugural “Pitch, Hit, and Run” competition and performed the hitting part of the competition in front of 16,000 fans at the Kingdome during the Mariners expansion season. Despite hitting over .800 his last year of little league, Eric gave up hardball in 1978 when his family bought a business in the very small town of Klamath, California and he would not play organized hardball again for 27 years. College saw Eric return to Davis and begin over two decades of a “legendary” softball career where he played dozens of games annually all over California

and Arizona. Eric worked throughout college as an umpire and spent nearly every fall and spring afternoon on the intramural fields either playing softball, umpiring games, or supervising other umpires (instead of going to class). Eric loved the years he played softball, particularly those years when he was on teams with both his dad and brother. Some of his individual highlights included a 13 RBI game in an Arizona tournament and a 3 HR, 9 RBI game against a team of district attorneys (when Eric was a young public defender) that is still talked about in the courthouse over twenty years later.

On a whim, Eric answered a newspaper ad in 2005 and tried out for a local Sacramento hardball league. The next year, Eric’s team won the Sunday league championship (his first of TEN). Eric began playing in the SMSBL in the Spring league in 2008 with the Nationals and has since played in the SMSBL Spring/ Night leagues with the Bears, Timberwolves, Phillies, Pirates, Solons, Cubs, Riverdogs, most recently with the A’s Legends, and most notably with the Seals.

Eric has a reputation of playing through injuries - he’s had a torn ACL since 2006 that he’s never had repaired because he did not want to miss six months of baseball, and he’s also played nearly his entire career with a torn rotator cuff in his throwing shoulder - only getting it fixed when it completely tore loose from the bone in June 2022 (but he played and pitched for another five months first). Eric’s favorite hardball memories are the ten Sunday championships, particularly the last five with the Bulldogs (especially the 2015 “Miracle at Mahany”) and winning a handful of night league titles with the Seals, particularly Summer 2018 when Eric started all three playoff games on the bump (in eight days) and won them all, including throwing two complete games.

Eric has had many other memorable moments as a starting pitcher where he’s notched over 130 wins (including a no-hitter) and more than 1100 strikeouts. Eric’s favorite pitching memory is an 84-pitch shut-out in Arizona in 2017 caught by HOFer Dave Absher. Eric has also amassed more than 1100 hits batting over the years (over 300 of them for extra bases), including 26 home runs. Eric will play his 900th adult baseball game later this year.

Eric continues to represent the SMSBL and its teams at both Regional and the MSBL World Series in Arizona and proudly served on the SMSBL Board of Directors from 2014-2019.

It is completely surreal to think that someone with essentially no baseball experience could walk into a tryout at the age of 38 and, nineteen years later, manage to join such a prestigious group of men and women. Eric is truly thankful to be inducted into the SMSBL Hall of Fame and humbled to receive this tremendous honor, but he is also grateful to have had the opportunity to have been a teammate (at one time or another) of 35 of these outstanding individuals. The greatest part of these past nineteen seasons is (still) learning the game - most of it from these tremendous teammates.

Finally, Eric would like to thank the one person without whom he would not be receiving this honor: the love of his life, the Honorable Danielle Ramirez. She literally saved his life and his baseball career truly blossomed once she became a fixture in his world.



## Taylor Welz

Taylor grew up in a military family that moved often in his early years. His first memorable baseball experiences came in Wiesbaden Germany. Along with playing 4 years of Little League in Wiesbaden, summers were spent playing pick-up baseball with friends in the big fields behind the base housing area. As a 12-year-old Taylor played 3b for the Wiesbaden LL All Star team that were the Champions of Germany in 1972. Wiesbaden was the runner up to Torrejon Spain for the European Championship and a trip to Williamsport, PA. home of the Little League World Series. The 4-3 and 6-5 losses to Torrejon were two of the most memorable losses in Taylor’s baseball career.

Taylor played 3 years of baseball at Nevada Union High School. He was the starting second basemen and leadoff hitter for Fred Metz’ 1977 Miners that finished 2nd in the SFL to a talented Oakmont team. At 18, following his freshman year of college he played shortstop for Nevada City’s Big-League team and was the starting shortstop for the District 54 All Star team.

After playing fall ball at Sacramento State in 1979 coach John Smith suggested Taylor talk to Coach Dennis DeRoss at College of the Siskiyous. Although Smith had converted Taylor to an outfielder, Coach DeRoss needed a shortstop, so Taylor filled the position. He earned Golden Valley All Conference honors hitting .343 and starting all 33 games and the All Conference All Star game.

Taylor retired from competitive baseball in 1980 but stayed active playing a variety of sports including basketball, softball, road running, golf and cycling. In 1982 he completed the San Francisco Marathon and from 1986 -1992 Taylor completed the Davis Double 3 times and the Markleeville Death Ride 4 times.

Taylor started coaching in 1992 when his oldest son Anthony started playing baseball. Taylor coached baseball and basketball from 1992-2009 including taking the 2006 Babe Ruth Junior Little League All Star team to the Regional Finals in Beaverton Oregon where they beat Mission Viejo 2-1 to win the California State Championship before losing to Arizona 4-3 in the semifinals. From 2000 to 2009 Taylor coached AAU basketball for the Nevada City Blazers, Pacific Pistols and YBA Dawgs. He also coached the 2006 8th grade Magnolia Rattlers to a 29-0 record and the Nor Cal State Championship.

In the summer of 2008 shortly after meeting Auburn Brave’s Manager Mike Baker and talking with long-time family friend Dave Kephart, Taylor joined our SMSBL. At 48 years young, he played CF for the Auburn Braves. His first trip to the Arizona MSBL World Series was in October of 2008 and he hasn’t missed one since. Taylor played on many teams over the last 15 years, often playing for 2 or 3 teams in the same season. In addition to the Auburn Braves, he played for the Gold Country Buzzards, Dave Kephart’s Auburn Pirates and Bud Sanchez’s Nor Cal Giants. He currently plays for Rick Salmeri’s Colt .45s.

Taylor also is a member of the Sacramento Royals who have been a dominant team at the Regional and National level for many years. The Royals have been managed by Gary Stonebrook, Jim Tygrett-DeNuzzi, and now Bobby Brown. They have won numerous regional tournaments as well as several World Series titles. The Royals are by far the winningest and most talented team Taylor has played with in his SMSBL career.

Taylor played for seven World Series Champions including the 2010 Sacramento Mud Dogs, the 2013 Nor Cal Giants, the 2015 and 2016 Sacramento Royals, the 2015 and 2016 Auburn Braves and the 2017 Sacramento Tribe. In 2013 Taylor was the winning pitcher in relief in both the semifinal and championship games. Taylor was honored with the 2017 World Series MVP award from the Tribe’s Manager Joe Soto. Taylor is fortunate to have had the opportunity to play with some of the best players and managers in the SMSBL. He appreciates the efforts of President Alan Van Ness and all the Board Members past and present. Taylor feels Sacramento MSBL is truly one of the best, if not the best in the country.