

GLENN CARLSON - Distinguished Service Award

This award was established to recognize individuals whose actions have brought outstanding positive recognition to Minnesota Amateur Baseball. It is given to individuals who have made special meritorious contributions to furthering the promotion of Minnesota Amateur Baseball.



Warren Cook Sleepy Eye

Warren was born in rural Sleepy Eye in 1950 and developed a great love for sports at a young age. However, he contracted polio as a three-year-old, which affected his ability to play sports. He also saw limited opportunities to play due to chores on the family farm, but became a batboy for Mulligan in the Twin River League as an 11-year-old. Later in high school, he became the team statistician for Sleepy Eye St. Mary's football and eventually did some sports writing. While in college at Southwest Minnesota State University, he worked in the sports information office, and he also reported sports on the campus TV station three times a week. He graduated from SMSU in 1974 with a degree in Speech Communications.

While still in college, he and his uncle, Duke Cook, coached the Mulligan girls softball team and his two younger sisters, capturing the Teen League championship twice. He also coached his younger brother, Jeff, who was on some of his Leavenworth Jr. Bi-County and Bi-County baseball teams who won six league championships from 1973-80. He coached the Sleepy Eye Legion team in 1978, and after a 5-year hiatus, Warren helped re-start the Sleepy Eye Indians amateur baseball team in 1981. He managed the Indians for two years and served on the board. He was also a member of the Sleepy Eye Jaycees for two years.

Perhaps Warren's greatest contribution to amateur baseball began in 1980, when he umpired for the first time. He worked 50 games on the bases that year and even worked with his twin brother, Wayne, in the state tournament in Brownton. The two brothers started South Central Umpires in 1990 and Warren served as its president for five years. He worked 16 consecutive state amateur tournaments from 1980 to 1995 and umpired the 1994 Class C Championship game in Arlington with Wayne. Through the years, he has worked virtually every level of baseball from high school, VFW, legion, amateur and small college baseball. He umpired five MSHSL state tournaments and worked the All-Star series in Chaska five times. All in all, he umpired over 3,700 baseball and softball games and officiated over 1,000 basketball games over 40 years.

Warren, along with his brother, Wayne, through their many interactions as umpires with coaches, players and fans have long been considered by many to be among the greatest ambassadors of amateur baseball in Minnesota.



Wayne Cook Redwood Falls

Wayne's love for baseball began as a 10-year-old when he watched the MLB Game of the Week on the family's small black and white TV. He quickly developed a liking for the New York Yankees and began memorizing the players' statistics.

In 1961 at the age of 11, Wayne became a batboy for the Mulligan amateur baseball team in the Twin River League, whose diamond was two miles from his family farm. In his teenage years, he played two seasons for Leavenworth in the Bi-County League as a left-handed first baseman. During his high school days, he became the statistician for football, basketball and baseball which served as a precursor to his sports writing career. Along with his twin brother, Warren, he also coached a Little League baseball team for two years, which was comprised of kids in the neighborhood.

When he went off to college at Southwest Minnesota State University in 1968, he developed an interest in umpiring, a career that would span over 50 years. He even attended Joe Brinkman's pro umpire school in Florida in 1978. During his umpiring career, he was active in seven different umpire associations and co-founded South Central Umpires Association with Warren in 1990. Wayne umpired approximately 100 youth, high school, college and amateur games per year. He umpired in 13 state amateur tournaments and he and Warren had the honor of working the Class C state championship game in Arlington in 1994. He umpired the Play Ball! High School All Star Series in Chaska for six years, worked 13 national fastpitch softball tournaments, earning the National Indicator Fraternity Award in 2019 and served as volunteer umpire coordinator for the Redwood Area Youth Baseball Association (RAYBA) for over 15 years. Wayne also received the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award from SMSU in 2023 and will be inducted into the Minnesota Sports Federation Softball Hall of Fame in 2024.

Wayne was a sportswriter for 25 years, and wrote columns, features and compiled weekly statistics for local amateur baseball teams and moonlighted as an umpire and basketball official. All in all, Wayne has umpired over 5,300 baseball and softball games, officiated over 2,000 basketball games and hundreds of football games in his career.

Through it all, Wayne was supported by his wife, Margaret, his son Jeff (Amy) and grandson, Hunter.



2023

Glenn Carlson Award Winners