

Gene Bartolozzi Memorial Park

"It all started when I put my hand up". That is how it all began. Already known for his work with the Brown's Park baseball league, Mr. Bartolozzi volunteered to be the first President of the newly formed West Mountain Baseball Association in 1980. A commitment he made up until his death in 2004. Mr. Bartolozzi was a true visionary whose primary interest was to see that baseball players and coaches received the best opportunities and resources available in Hamilton.

Not only was Mr. Bartolozzi the President of the WMBA, he was a coach, manager and assumed many other positions on the field. He was also well known throughout Southern Ontario with the Ontario Baseball Association. He took his Bantam "AAA" team to the 1987 Provincial Championships and won. His hand picked Midget/Junior team was off to tour Europe and included many of the players from his Bantam championship team. Another Midget/Junior team was entered into tournaments in the United States and was invited to participate in the AABC Connie Mack World Series in Farmington, New Mexico. Many of his players won scholarships to universities in the US.

Over the course of his involvement with minor baseball, Mr. Bartolozzi has had an impact on thousands of children and coaches in Hamilton as a mentor and role model. His passion was to see that a child recognized that they were important and what they had to offer to the world was just as important. He was always looking for ways to improve the skills of the players in the West Mountain area. WMBA hosted New York Yankee pitcher, Jim Abbott and Toronto Blue Jay John Olerud as guest speakers at an organized summer camp.

As a result of Mr. Bartolozzi's involvement with West Mountain Baseball, he became a director and Vice President of the Hamilton District Baseball Association and in 1997 he became a life member. He was also instrumental in building the Hamilton Wildcats Baseball Association, a programme for elite players and also served as its President.

Finally, after many years of volunteer work, Mr. Bartolozzi was recognized by his peers. In 1992, he received the "Distinguished Award" for volunteer service from the City of Hamilton. In 2000, he was awarded the Hamilton Sports Council "All Sport Award" for his many years with the HDBA and later in that year he received the West Mountain "Cougar Award" for his 20 years of service with WMBA. In 2001, he was awarded the first ever Ontario Trillium Foundation "Community Volunteer Award" for his exceptional contribution to Amateur Sports in the City of Hamilton.

Mr. Bartolozzi was tenacious and had the respect of his colleagues and those who knew him. He was someone you could count on. Not only would he stand by his decisions but he would be there for you to offer his support and encouragement. Mr. Bartolozzi surrounded himself with great people, he loved people and was always upbeat. He also involved his family in this journey. His wife Pat and children Anthony, Bryan and Jeanine were all involved in some way with West Mountain Baseball, whether they were playing, umpiring, grooming diamonds, coaching or answering the phones. The next generation of the Bartolozzi family is continuing in their father's footsteps. All the children are still involved with the park and now Mr. Bartolozzi's grandchildren are playing baseball. Many of the kid's that played at West Mountain are bringing back their children to play at West Mountain.

For over 35 years, West Mountain Baseball has seen thousands of children go through it's programme. Enrollment has fluctuated throughout the years but it has always been about the children – playing baseball, learning sportsmanship and most of all having fun. West Mountain Baseball continues to build upon Mr. Bartolozzi's legacy and a fitting tribute to his memory would be to have the park named after him.