

MIKE AXELSON



Mike Axelsson had already established himself as a formidable power hitter in the Detroit area before he was barely old enough to vote. However, no one could envision his emergence on the National Slow-Pitch scene when at the age of 21 he led Michael's Lounge to the 1966 National Championship in Parma, Ohio. Axelsson, named the tournament's Most Valuable Player, hit a tournament leading .792 including a 5-5 performance with three home-runs in the Championship game against New York. He also hit five home-runs and drove in 13 runs in the Championship. According to Axelsson, being named the MVP and capturing the National Tournament at his youthful age was the highlight of his career.

In addition to being selected as the youngest MVP in ASA history, Axelsson was also named All-American in 1973 with a .769 batting average including 12 home-runs and 34 runs batted in. In the 1970 National Tournament, Axelsson claimed All-American status once again batting .584 with three home-runs among his 10 hits in 17 at bats. In 1969, Axelsson was named a second team All-American batting .720.

The Michael's Lounge team, which eventually became known as Little Caesars in the late 60's, always looked forward to competing in a Springfield, Ohio tournament each year. Behind the leadership of Axelsson and other M.D.A.S.A. past inductees, Little Caesars captured many tournaments in Springfield which featured some of the nations top teams. Axelsson currently resides in Utica with his wife Bonnie and four boys - Michael, Gregory, Christopher and Bradley.

ROCCO PALMERI



Rocco "Peck" Palmeri played the game of fast pitch softball for more than 20 years. Palmeri played the outfield and was a member of three-time A.S.A. National Champion Briggs Beautyware of Detroit in 1948, 52 and 53. Palmeri was also a member of two national runner-up teams - Tip Top Tailors of Toronto in 1950 and in 1954 for Briggs Beautyware. He was also chosen to play on the 1948 All-Star team where he hit two home runs and two triples while knocking

in nine runs. One of the biggest hits of Palmeri's career was a solo home run in the fourth inning of the 1953 National Championship game against the Clearwater (Florida) Bombers. His hit was the only one Clearwater ace hurler John Hunter gave up in the game as Briggs Beautyware went on to capture its third title with a 1-0 victory.

The left handed hitting Palmeri, had a .330 batting average in National Industrial fast-pitch play and in 1948, hit a career high .352 average. Palmeri currently resides in Brown City, Michigan.

GEORGE GILLIES



George Gillies began his involvement with softball at the age of 10 where he was a batboy for the Detroit House of Correction softball team. His dad was the manager of the team and also the prison warden. In 1948, his dad was credited with managing the prison team to the state championship.

Gillies began his umpiring career in the 1960's where in a 10 year span he umpired in many local levels in addition to numerous national events including the 1970 men's major slow-pitch tournament. Gillies was selected as the "All-National Umpire" in the 1970 National Championship.

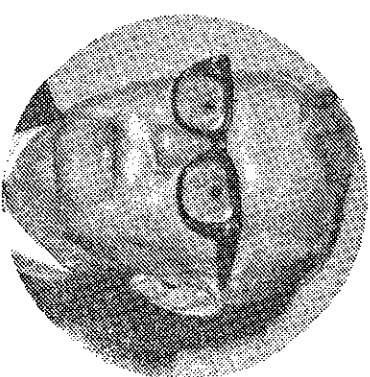
Gillies was appointed Metro Detroit A.S.A. Umpire-in-Chief in 1976 by Commissioner Bill Svochak. He is credited with organizing and implementing outstanding umpire camps including instruction on rules, positioning, umpire/player interaction, proper exercise and the psychological aspect of umpiring.

In 1976, Metro Detroit registered a mere 96 umpires. In only one year after Gillies began his responsibilities as U.I.C., Metro Detroit registered 229 umpires in 1977. The growth and quality of the program continued each year reaching a peak of 706 umpires in 1983.

Since 1980, Metro Detroit A.S.A. has been number one in the country twice and is always in the top three for Metro Associations in registering umpires. In 1985, M.D.A.S.A. ranked second in the nation behind Metro Cleveland.

Gillies has selected and sent 16 umpires from Metro Detroit to National Championships since 1976, with 12 of those umpires working tournament finals. In 1980, he received the Michigan Recreation and Park Association's highest award for his outstanding contributions in the field of recreation. Gillies, a University of Michigan graduate, is currently President of his own home-based Farmington Hills Company - The Institute for the Study of Motivation and Survival.

WILBUR E. LANDIS



Metro Detroit A.S.A. has come a long way in its 51 years of existence. The grass roots of the association can be traced to one person - Wilbur E. (Judge) Landis. Landis was the first Metro Detroit A.S.A. Commissioner serving the board from 1936-1942. He not only has grass roots in Metro Detroit, but also at the national level. Landis served as the second president of the National Amateur Softball Association from 1940-1942. Landis was also

one of the initial members of the A.S.A. Board of Governors, which later became the A.S.A. Executive Committee. Landis currently is retired and resides in Sedona, Arizona.