

A WINNING TRADITION

The Oberbruner Family

As Ranger baseball fans approach the playing field that runs along the south side of campus, they are reminded of what one man meant to the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. A new sign dedicates Ken “Red” Oberbruner Field, and Ken’s son Jamey (’81 psychology) calls it a tribute to the time and effort his dad put into the Rangers’ baseball program.

“He deserves the recognition,” Jamey said. “He put his heart and soul into this game.”

Ken’s youngest son, Richard (’83 English), said the new sign answers the question that is inevitably asked: Who is Ken “Red” Oberbruner? “The real answer is a long and wonderful one,” Richard said, “but the shorter version is reflected in the sign: ‘Someone definitely worth remembering.’”

Ken played high school basketball and baseball in Ashland, Wis. His talent earned him a scholarship to play both sports at the University of Notre Dame, and after college he played baseball and basketball professionally. When he retired as a player, Ken became the athletic director, and coached baseball and basketball at Milton College in Milton, Wis. He served Milton for 25 years and his oldest son, Kenneth (Skip), played for him in the mid-1960s.

Ken became the baseball coach at UW-Parkside in 1971 and held that job until his death in 1991. Jamey played for his dad from 1978–81. Richard did not play baseball but certainly appreciated his dad’s coaching skills.

“Dad was a coach’s coach,” Richard said. “High school football, basketball and baseball coaches would seek out his strategic thinking. This is one reason why dad is in the Wisconsin High School Coaches Hall of Fame, yet he was not a high school coach. It’s amazing to be inducted at a level in which he was not directly involved.”



FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT: TAMIE FALK-DAY, DAN OBERBRUNER, ANN OBERBRUNER, RUTH OBERBRUNER, JOEL WEAVER, LARRY OBERBRUNER. BACK ROW, FROM LEFT: RICHARD OBERBRUNER, LISA OBERBRUNER, JAMEY OBERBRUNER. FAMILY MEMBERS NOT PICTURED: KENNETH JR. (SKIP), TRISH (OBERBRUNER) MILLER, TED MILLER, CINDY (HENSCHL) OBERBRUNER.

It’s easy to see that the Oberbruner family is a baseball family. For Jamey, the competition is the attraction. “Not only is this game a competition against an opponent,” he said, “it’s a competition between yourself and the talent that you need to bring out as you compete.”

“Someone brought that talent out in me here at UW-Parkside—my dad, obviously—and found out that I could compete at a higher level. But that’s their job. That’s what teachers do!”

Jamey played at a higher level with the San Diego Padres and Pittsburgh Pirates from 1981–1984, and as a replacement player for the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1995.

“Jamey’s curve ball would come straight at my head and bend at the last second and catch the inside corner of the strike zone,” Richard said. “And he was just warming up.”

Besides Ken’s coaching and teaching career and Jamey’s playing career, Jamey’s wife, Cindy (Henschel) played basketball and volleyball for the Rangers.

“The beautiful campus, the professors, the student body, my teammates, and the athletic staff,” Jamey said, “it was a great positive experience that we all enjoyed.”

Richard got to know the campus at the ground level.

“I worked on the grounds crew between classes from 1979 to 1983,” he said. “Summer was the best time to maintain the campus flower beds, cut the grass, trim the trees, clear brush on the cross country trail. Parkside’s outdoor appeal equals the indoor classroom.”

Richard also has vivid memories of his dad’s competitive side. “I remember dad, Assistant Chancellor Gary Goetz and Lucian Rosa playing cut-throat racquetball at the gym during lunch,” he said. “My goodness, that was the most intense, competitive, foul-mouthed 60 minutes I have ever witnessed ... repeatedly. These three really went at it with only Lucian managing the occasional smile.”

“It was all in good fun but they played to win.”

Upcoming UW-Parkside Events

June 23

Arts & Crafts Festival

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Located east of Molinaro Hall on campus grounds. Cost is free.

For more information contact Jennifer Filippone at jennifer.filippone@uwp.edu or call 262-595-2581.

July 1 and 4

Fourth of July Parades

Sunday, July 1—Kenosha Parade—2 p.m.

Wednesday, July 4—Racine Parade—9 a.m.

Join the fun of “Marching with Parkside” in the parades.

Find out more by visiting www.uwp.edu/alumni

August 3–4

Relay for Life - American Cancer Society Fundraiser

UW-Parkside Campus Outdoor Running Track

From 6 p.m. on Friday, August 3, to 8 a.m. on Saturday, August 4.

Join the UW-Parkside Alumni Association Team at www.relayforlife.org/kenoshawi

Help staff the UWPAAs booth. Celebrate the memory or the life of someone you know in the fight against cancer.

More details at www.uwp.edu/alumni