

FEATURE

Grafton player inducted into Hall of Fame

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A CANADIAN CHAMPION - Marty Kernaghan wears his team Canada uniform for a team function.
PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Canada has an infielder in the International Softball Congress Hall of Fame.

At an induction ceremony in Kitchener on August 11 former Grafton resident Marty Kernaghan became the first Canadian infielder ever to be honoured by the Congress in this way.

Born in 1958 in Cobourg, Marty began his ball career at age five in Grafton. By the time he was 11 he was playing for championship teams. Under coach George Totten, he pitched for the OASA Squirt champions. He added two more provincial championships. One of those came in 1977 with the Grafton Juniors under the coaching hand of his brother Sandy.

In 1978 Marty moved on to the Oshawa Tonys. A year later he moved west to become a power-hitting infielder for the Western Major Fastball League champions in Camrose, Alberta.

The eighties was a decade of prominence.

In 1983 Marty was a member of the Canadian team that took gold at the Pan Am Games in Caracas, Venezuela.

During that period he played four seasons in Calgary.

In 1985, playing shortstop, he was named M.V.P. at the International Softball Congress (ISC) tournament in Kimberly, Wisconsin. In the same year he was the M.V.P. at the Canadian Senior Men's Championship in Waterloo. His Calgary-based

team also won the overall title. His batting average that year was .386. In 85 games he hit 26 home runs and collected 87 RBI's.

In 1987 he was recruited to play for Penn Corp of Sioux City, Iowa. That group of athletes was ISC champion in 1988, 89, 91 and 92.

His career batting average was well over 300, including games against the best fastball pitchers in the world.

Local ball fans will remember his homecoming visit to the annual Grafton Ball Tournament. Marty and his ISC champion Sioux City team were shocked 5-4 by an all star squad before 2000 spectators.

In 1992 the Canadian team won the world championship in Manila, The Phillipines, beating New Zealand in the final.

In his final year in 1995, Marty earned All World First Team recognition for the eighth time, for his play at third base with the Gateway 2000 Soos. His batting average that season was a stunning .409.

The next year he was inducted into Softball Canada's Hall of Fame along with his 1983 team mates.

Marty is the youngest son of Jack and the late Pat Kernaghan. He now resides in Sioux City with his wife Bev and children Jennie, 18 and Abby, 11.

Now retired from competitive ball, he is the vice-president and director of hockey operations for the Sioux City Musketeers and a corporate jet pilot.