

Popular fastball, hockey volunteer Jim Ford passes at 84

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The softball and hockey communities in Halton Hills are mourning the loss of long-time volunteer Jim Ford over the weekend.

Ford passed away Friday at the age of 84.

Nicknamed Tubby, he was involved extensively as a volunteer with hockey in the winter and fall and fastball in the spring and summer at both youth and adult levels.

It was estimated that 8,000 girls played in the Kinsmen Girls Softball League in the four decades of his involvement with the organization.

Starting off as an umpire, he served as commissioner and CEO for the KGSL into his late 70s.

The league was in danger of folding in the early 1970s before Ford, Garry Alton and Pat Butler put our heads together because we wanted the league to carry on, he explained in a 2001 *Independent & Free Press* article.

All four of his daughters would play in the league and one KGSL graduate, Kara McGaw, went on to represent Canada at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

I like seeing the improvement of the girls through the years, from the time they're five or six years old through to when they're 18, he added.

It gives them especially for the older girls something to look forward to doing each week.

Ford's love for the sport began in the 1940s when he was the batboy for the Alliance Paper Mill and Georgetown ladies fastball teams, later managing the Georgetown Combines to the Industrial Fastball League title in 1958.



JIM FORD

At the rink, he served as president of Legion Minor Hockey and the Minor Hockey Support Group and was trainer for the 1958 Ontario Hockey Assoc. Senior champions.

Ford was the first person to receive the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award as well as Halton Hills Sports Museum Hall of Fame induction and was also the first to become an Honorary Member of the Kinsmen Club in Georgetown.

Another role for him was president of the Industrial Softball League for several years.

It just becomes a habit and it's something I enjoy doing, so why not? said Ford at his HHSM Hall of Fame induction in 2007.

Ford was also well known for playing Santa Claus at the Georgetown Market Place and with youngsters in minor hockey. His volunteer work

at Georgetown's Royal Canadian Legion included Saturday afternoon movies and calling bingo.

He was the recipient of the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship and the Queen's Jubilee medal, along with recognition from the Canadian Red Cross as a lifelong blood donor.

A tree commemorating his community involvement stands at the Georgetown Fairgrounds.

Ford is survived by his wife of 58 years, Theresa, daughters Geraldine (Martin), Sheila (Joe), June and Andrea, seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Family and Friends will be received at J.S. Jones Funeral Home in Georgetown on Friday, Jan. 27 from 6-9 p.m.

A celebration of life is slated for Saturday, Jan. 28 at The Club at North Halton from 1-4 p.m.

Donations in Ford's memory can be made to Jumpstart, Cystic Fibrosis or a charity of choice.



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