

# HONOREE HAYNES-RIDLEY 'KNOWS THE HISTORY BEHIND EVERYTHING'

Continued from page 5

cation, Haynes-Ridley started coaching in the Kinsmen league and Georgetown Baseball Association (GBA) while continuing her involvement in youth bowling. Her involvement and that of her husband Dave only grew when their son Nicholas began playing ball and bowling.

"We would be away at a tournament, and all the parents are kicking back, relaxing," said Faye DeMelo, "and Dee Dee's on the computer making sure there are umpires for a tournament in Georgetown." Though she knew her through the GBA, DeMelo wasn't surprised when her daughter wanted to join the GLPL, that Haynes-Ridley was the contact.

"Without people like that, things don't happen," DeMelo said. "You need that go-to person who has a real feel for what's going on. And because she grew up here, she knows the history behind everything, too."

That history is part of what fuels her involvement. When the Kinsmen league was in danger of folding because there was no one to run it, Haynes-Ridley started inquiring about volunteers. Many people told her their daughter was almost finished playing in the league, though Haynes-Ridley never saw that as the sole reason for being involved.

"Jim Ford ran Kinsmen girls for 50 years," she said. "The coaches I had gave so much. Pete Williams was my coach in bowling. His



Herb Garbutt / Metroland

Dee Dee Haynes Ridley is the Georgetown Lions Club Citizen of the Year. Haynes-Ridley has played an important role in helping provide sporting opportunities for the local children, coaching and serving as an executive for Georgetown, and now Halton Hills Minor Baseball Association, the Georgetown Ladies Powderpuff League and the Georgetown Youth Bowling League. Haynes-Ridley also serves on the Carruthers Road Co-op board and works at Georgetown District High School in the Life Skills Program, assisting children with special needs.

sister owned the bowling alley, and he would come in from Toronto and sleep in the back room so he could coach us the next morning. We knew he was there for us."

Not wanting to see the Kinsmen league fold, Haynes-Ridley, who had gone from player, to executive member to president of the GLPL, and Sue Subject, the league's past president, worked together to bring the league into the GLPL.

Knowing the history can sometimes makes things harder, though. Haynes-Ridley said when Georgetown Bowl closed in August, "It broke my heart." Yet, she remains involved, and the bowlers had to move to an alley in Streetsville. She says it's her way of helping preserve a sport facing declining numbers, but one that has provided her with so many memories.

Haynes-Ridley's own experience growing up in the

leagues gives her a unique perspective that allows her to easily identify with the kids.

When Halton Hills Minor Baseball took over the operation of the snack bar at the Georgetown Fairgrounds, Haynes-Ridley's first order of business was to get a milk carton.

"I remember being a kid going there," she said. "As a kid, you need a milk carton to stand on so you can see the chocolate bars."

And from her volunteer position at the snack bar, which raises money to build ballparks in town, she can keep an eye on many of the organizations she's involved in.

"Once she saw an out-of-town coach giving a 12-year-old umpire a hard time," DeMelo recalls. "She calmly walked up and asked the coach, 'Where do you work? Because I'd like to come there and heckle you while you work.' She knows it can

be handled tactfully and if we want kids to continue to be umpires, we have to show them respect."

"Dee Dee doesn't put up with any crap," DeMelo adds, "but she does it in such a nice manner."

Her level-headed approach also helps in her professional life, working at Georgetown District High School in the life skills program where she assists young adults with special needs.

It is also valuable in her non-sporting volunteer activities as a board member of the Carruthers Road Co-op housing complex.

But if you're ever looking for Haynes-Ridley, chances are pretty good you can find her at a ball diamond or a bowling alley.

"I love sports. I love working with kids," Haynes-Ridley says. "And I have the time, so why not?"

It's because of her love for those activities that she didn't suspect anything when Doug Penrice from the Lions Club called and started talking about baseball. Until the conversation turned to the citizen of the year award.

"I was completely shocked," she said. "I look at some of the names on that award, and most of them are of my parents' generation. It's humbling to be in that group."

Haynes-Ridley will be honoured at the Citizen of the Year dinner March 26 at the Mold-Masters SportsPlex. Tickets are \$50. For ticket information, contact Doug Penrice at 905-873-8469.



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