

OFHS



WALL OF FAME

Inducted September 19, 2009



LA VERN (LEFTY) MAYER

It was natural that La Vern (Lefty) Mayer would have a connection to the dairy industry, having been born into a cheese making family in 1926. When Lefty was a year old, his father, Herman, started the Morgan Coop Cheese Factory, a place where Lefty spent many hours growing up. Herman was an enthusiastic sports fan and encouraged Lefty to develop those skills. At OFHS Lefty was involved in football and basketball before graduating with the Class of '44. Baseball was not a school sport at the time. Instead, he played for the Lena Legion team.

In '45 he played with Bogda Motors in the Green Bay Industrial League. The following year he started with the Green Bay Blue Jays a Milwaukee Braves farm team, but then went to the Senators Baseball School at Sanford, Florida. In Florida, he worked at a plant processing oranges and grapefruit to support himself and played for several teams during the '46 to '50 baseball seasons, including playing in Havana's Gran Stadium. In 1952 and '53 he played with teams in Marinette and Green Valley. In '53 Lefty returned to Florida with his wife Marilyn and son Lee and played with three different class "A" level minor league teams before a season ending injury.

After high school, except for his baseball playing time, Lefty continued the family tradition as a cheesemaker at the Morgan Coop. In 1959 he purchased and operated the Sankey Dairy and delivered milk to homes in Oconto Falls and surrounding communities. In 1968 he became a distributor for Morning Glory Dairy and after 20 years passed it on to his son-in-law. He continued to deliver milk for the business until it was sold in 1998.

Lefty was active with the Oconto Falls Businessman's Association and the P.T.A. and served as president of both organizations for a period. He served on several citizens' committees for the school district in the 60's before the new high school was built. Lefty was active with St. Paul's Lutheran Church and held a number of positions on the Church Council from '57 to '06.

For over 45 years he coached youth baseball at various levels. He helped start the Legion Baseball team in Oconto Falls and served as head coach from '66 to '81. In 1975 he coached the North Team for the Wisconsin American Legion All Star game held in Milwaukee County Stadium.

La Vern and Marilyn, his wife of nearly 60 years, raised four children, Leland, Lawrence, James and Debra, who all went on to have successful careers in medical fields. He continues to share his love of sports with 12 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

9