

RE: Renaming Proposal

Park Element to be Renamed: “Fairgrounds Diamond #1” in Georgetown

Proposed Name Change: “Fairgrounds – Kevin Burke Field”

Rationale for Name Change: To commemorate a true builder of baseball in Georgetown, Coach Kevin “Duke” Burke, who passed away in December of 2022.

Who was Kevin Burke: Kevin Burke was a founder and the first head coach of the Georgetown Eagles Junior baseball team (1982). He had a passionate love for baseball and a desire to share it with others. He was incredibly dedicated to teaching, training and coaching his players, as well as fundraising. He was also directly responsible for the installation of the lights at Fairgrounds Diamond #1, which 40 years later are still making night games possible at the diamond. Renaming “Fairgrounds Diamond #1” to “Fairgrounds - Kevin Burke Field” would be a fitting and well-deserved tribute to a person who gave so much to baseball in Georgetown.

A brief backgrounder illustrating Kevin Burke’s determination and dedication to baseball in Georgetown: In 1979, after being out of the game for 15 years, Kevin “Duke” Burke returned to baseball to coach a house league team of 14-year-olds in Georgetown, Ontario. Halfway through the season he invited a few players from each team, that he felt had potential, to participate in extra practice, with the goal being to form a rep team which, at the time, didn’t exist in Georgetown. Kevin’s practices were marathons of skill development, lasting 2-3 hours; and if players wanted to stay for extra fielding or hitting, Kevin never said no. Practices took place 4 or 5 times a week, starting in March (as soon as the snow was off the field) and going into November (only stopping when it was too cold to hold an aluminum bat). These practices went on for 3 years, always in the hopes of getting a rep team for Georgetown.

When he wasn’t on the field, Kevin was burning up the phone lines organizing exhibition games for his team and appealing to the powers that be to grant his players a team. In 1982 his wishes were finally answered when Georgetown was invited to join the Halton County Baseball Association. Kevin and his players named their team the Eagles.

That spring, on off days, Kevin was pursuing a sponsor for the Eagles which he eventually landed—a local real estate company—to help cover the cost of uniforms, equipment and travel.

The Georgetown Eagles Junior Baseball team played their first game against Mississauga and won 7-5. That inaugural season they would go on to reach the final of the Ontario Baseball Association playoffs, unfortunately losing in the bottom of the ninth to St. Catharines.

During the first season a few of the Eagles games had to be called early due to darkness. This inspired Kevin’s next mission; to have lights installed at the team’s home diamond. By next season, his efforts

were rewarded. 40 years later those lights are still making night games possible at Fairgrounds Diamond #1.

After his coaching days with the Eagles ended, Kevin continued as an active builder of baseball in Georgetown. He coached on and off for 12 years, formally coaching a house league team for one year, and informally coaching at weekend practices held for players who sought tutoring and additional skills development. Even at his day job, as a custodian at Harrison Public School, Kevin offered his assistance to budding athletes, often coaching them during recess in the school gym and donating money and equipment to support school teams.

Kevin "Duke" Burke's love for baseball and desire to share the game with others was a lifelong passion. Without his commitment, baseball in Georgetown wouldn't be what it is today.