

The Man Behind the Award and Scholarship



A TRIBUTE TO JOE FROM A FELLOW FORHSB BOARD MEMBER (September 2017):

Joe D'Alessio passed away on Friday after a 9 month battle with kidney cancer. Joe passed the same way he lived his life – with quiet courage, honor, selflessness, and an unrelenting commitment to his family.

You can't define Joe in a couple of sentences or anecdotes – his heart was simply too big, his energy too contagious, his counsel beyond wise, and his contributions too many to recount. He'd cringe at this description by the way, as it was always about the kids, the team, the program, and the community. It was never, ever about Joe.

Joe played the game himself, a second baseman at Stonehill College - can't help but envision a Pedroia-like presence on the field! - and instilled the love of the game in his son Mike (and of course wife Lisa and daughter Jill were there for every game). He coached teams in Reading Youth Baseball, and Babe Ruth and those kids all came out better players, and more importantly better people, based on their time spent with Joe. It was always about respect for the game, and Joe coached in his usual understated and supportive manner. And his teams were always pretty darn good.

To be clear though, it wasn't about "his" team. The pitching mound a disaster at Washington? Joe will fix it. No one serving pizza between games at Hunt? Joe will do it. The batter's box under water? Joe will take care of it. No umpire for today's game? Joe can ump, no problem.

Joe didn't just sit on the boards of these programs – Joe didn't sit much period. He was consistently THE driving force to get things done and did it in a way that made everyone feel like they were part of the solution. Joe had an uncanny ability to get big things done with few words, build consensus, and then execute. If there was an issue that had everyone perplexed, all faces would turn to Joe for guidance. Joe would without fail see a solution, articulate it with zero ego involved, and the group would gratefully reply with a collective "Yes Joe, thanks, that's the best way to do it."

When Coach Blanchard took over the RMHS baseball program in 2013, he wanted to build a fundraising group to support the program. Joe joined the board of Friends of Reading High School Baseball right out of the gate and virtually everything the organization has accomplished has Joe's fingerprints on it. And he remained on the board to the very end, contributing all the way, selfless as always. Do yourself a service and head over to Moscariello Ballpark at Morton Field this weekend. The new dugouts, the seating area for Mr. and Mrs. Moscariello, the overall quality of the field (best in the Middlesex!)... it's all because of Joe, though he'd never take credit for it. The annual golf tournament fund raiser is Joe's baby as well. He owned it from start to finish with vision, commitment, enthusiasm and attention to detail. Thanks Joe, couldn't have done it without you.

Joe D'Alessio's contributions to the Reading baseball community don't define Joe, they merely describe the man. Everything he did for the baseball community was simply an extension of the grace, wisdom, commitment, humor and kindness with which he lived his life and loved his family. We miss you Joe, rest in peace, you'll always be in our hearts and minds, and we're all the better for having had the opportunity to know you.