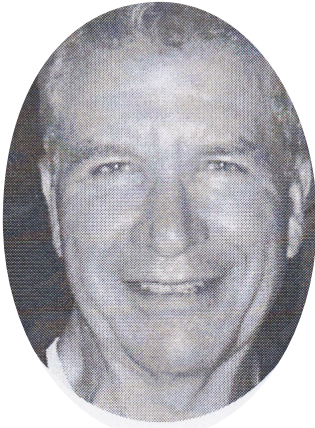


## *Pete Lopusznick*



While his roots have always been deeply planted one town over in Westport, Pete Lopusznick was also able to make an impact on the baseball diamond in Norwalk during the 1960s.

In fact, in 1960 he played centerfield and batted .359 with four home runs and 10 stolen bases for Hat Corporation of America in the Norwalk City League, where he played for coach Jim Bellantoni, a 1971 Norwalk Old Timers honoree. Two of Lopusznick's teammates on that Hat Corp. team were also future Old Timers honorees, Jack Redway (1993) and Ted Fecenko (2006).

In 1961, after Hat Corp. dropped out of the City League, Lopusznick was recruited by Joe Marino, another Old Timers honoree, to play for the Laurel Athletic Club in both the Norwalk City League and Stamford City League. Lopusznick played centerfield and batted third or fourth for the Laurels for six seasons, averaging .360 at the plate with six to eight home runs per season. His teammates included Jim Romanello, Jerry Fishman, Dennis Christopher, Steve Gulyas and Harvey Melzer, all of them Old Timers award winners as well.

But the Laurels wasn't the only team Lopusznick played for during that time. In 1961 he helped lead the White Eagles to the Bridgeport City League championship, belting six home runs and stealing 17 bases while

batting leadoff. Then from 1962-64 he patrolled centerfield at Seaside Park in Bridgeport for the Lenox AC team, hitting close to .350 each year with a slugging percentage of .600.

It was also during this time that Lopusznick played baseball at Duquesne University, making the team as a "walk on" and eventually earning a half-scholarship while starting in center his last three years at the Pittsburgh school. He would lead the team in RBIs with 25 in 22 games, in slugging percentage with a .629 mark, and batted .350 over his junior and senior years.

During the summer of '63, Lopusznick also played for a Norwalk team of college players that Jack Deering assembled and competed in the Danbury Twilight League.

Following his graduation from Duquesne in 1964, and another summer of playing baseball in the Norwalk, Stamford and Bridgeport city leagues, Lopusznick signed a professional baseball contract with the Kansas City Athletics.

Both Marino and local scout Lou D'Orso, two of Lopusznick's biggest supporters in Norwalk, were instrumental in the signing, and Lopusznick rewarded their belief in him with a solid first year of pro ball. After participating in spring training in Daytona Beach, Lopusznick was assigned to Kansas City's Class A minor league affiliate in the Florida State League, where he converted from outfield to first base and batted .287.

Unfortunately, an injury which sidelined him for several weeks eventually led to his release and he returned to the Westport/Norwalk area to continue his baseball career and finish grad school.

In 1966, Lopusznick earned his Master's Degree in Math from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and went on to enjoy a long career with the AT&T Company, working at several branches and holding various technical positions such as systems analyst, computer programming, senior systems analyst, technical management and supervision, business analyst and technical project management. His stops included New York City, Newark, NJ, the Southern Region Headquarters in Atlanta, the AT&T Headquarters in Morristown, NJ, and Bell Labs in Holmdel, NJ.

During this time, however, Lopusznick continued to be active in athletics. But with his baseball days behind him, he turned to fast-pitch softball, playing with several teams in New Jersey and Atlanta from 1970-81. In 1973, he played centerfield and won the league batting title with a .636 average as he helped Corrigan's Construction win the Middletown Township (NJ) Softball League championship. And from 1978-81, he averaged .410 over four seasons with a slugging percentage of .670 while playing for the "Leftovers" in the Western Electric Company Northeast Region Softball League in Newark, N.J.

Lopusznick also coached his three sons in baseball and one daughter in softball in the Middletown (NJ) Youth Athletic Association, winning five league championships in baseball and coaching on two all-star teams. He also became a certified umpire in the Jersey Shore Umpires Association in 2002 and continues to officiate high school varsity and sub-varsity level games.

Lopusznick's sports career began in the Westport Little League, where he played from 1952-54, leading the league in home runs as an 11 and 12 year-old and once striking out 17 batters in a game. He then led the Knights of Columbus to three straight Westport Babe Ruth League titles, compiling a 16-1 pitching record over three years. He also played baseball and basketball at Assumption Grammar School in 1955 and '56.

He would go on to play high school football and baseball at Fairfield Prep, earning All-MBIAC honors in baseball as a junior in 1959 and senior in 1960. He also pitched for the Westport American Legion in 1958 and the Fairfield Legion in '59.

Married to the former Connie Fiore, the 66-year-old Lopusznick retired from Lucent Technologies in 2001 and now enjoys spending time with his three grandchildren.