

Lee Johnson



The city of Norwalk has produced its share of outstanding baseball players over the years and the name **Lee Johnson** certainly has to rate near the top of the list.

In fact, in 1971 the former Norwalk High School and University of Connecticut standout was named to *The Norwalk Hour's* 100th anniversary All-Time High School Baseball Team.

And with good reason. Born in 1943 and growing up in the Cranbury section of Norwalk, Johnson began to show his baseball skills as a nine-year-old in the American Little League. He played on the JWV team for coach Lou D'Orso from 1952-'56, helping his team win the city championship in 1956 and making the all-star team in both '55 and '56.

Then from 1957-'59, Johnson played in the Brien McMahon Babe Ruth League, making the all-star team all three years and helping his Fire Department team win the league championship in 1959.

It was also in 1959 that Johnson began an outstanding three-year career with the Norwalk High School baseball team under coach Jack Cronin. It culminated with him being named a senior co-captain in 1961 while winning the FCIAC batting title and leading NHS to a 17-3 record and the FCIAC championship.

He received a baseball scholarship to the University of Connecticut and was a three-year starter for the Huskies from 1963-'64. The shortstop/third baseman helped lead UConn to the Yankee Conference championship in '63 and '65, as well as the New England championship in 1965 and a fifth place finish in the College World Series in Omaha, NE.

During his career, Johnson also played baseball for the American Legion and coach Frank Morgan, for the CYO team and coach John Deering, for Hilltop AC under coach Romas Bossone, for Strawberry Hill and coach Pat Spinola, and for the Laurel AC and coach Don Quinn.

Johnson was also a player/manager for the Laurels, who played in the Norwalk City League and the Stamford Twilight League, where he was named league MVP. He also played in the Portchester Twilight League, the prestigious Cape Cod Summer Baseball League, and in the Bridgeport City League with Savoy.

While at Norwalk High, Johnson also played three years of football and was a member of the 1961 varsity basketball team.

Johnson later served as a coach at both local high schools. In 1967, he became the junior varsity baseball coach at Brien McMahon, and eventually coached JV football before being promoted to defensive coordinator on the Senators' varsity.

He would return to his alma mater in 1984 as he was named Norwalk High's new head varsity baseball coach as well as the defensive coordinator with the Bears' football team. He would continue both positions until 1990 when he retired after 25 years in the Norwalk school system, teaching physical education at Columbus School, Ben Franklin and West Rocks Middle Schools, and Norwalk High.

Johnson also coached basketball and football on the junior high school level, as well as baseball in the Norwalk Senior Babe Ruth League and Cranbury League. In addition, he served as director of the National Developmental Summer Baseball Camp, and director of the YMCA Biddy Basketball League.

Now residing in New Fairfield, Johnson, who turned 58 last month, is currently director of sales training for Cellular One in the Hudson Valley and Catskill regions. He and his wife, the former Bonnie Beers, have two children, Lisa and Kevin, and two grandchildren.