

## Celia Bobrowsky



Dating all the way back to the early 1920s, there have been only a handful of Norwalkers who made it to the major leagues in baseball.

But Celia Bobrowsky, the only female in the group, took a different path than the others.

The Norwalk native and former local athlete is celebrating her 21st year in professional baseball, including the last seven as Director of Community Affairs for Major League Baseball. Prior to that, Bobrowsky spent 14 years in the Detroit Tigers organization, rising to the position of the club's Director of Community Affairs.

But her passion for sports began in Norwalk, and more specifically at Norwalk High School, where the 1976 graduate was a catcher on the softball team and

a forward with the field hockey team.

After NHS, Bobrowsky attended the University of Connecticut, but during the summers umpired softball in Norwalk, something she did from 1977-96, working three national tournaments along the way. It was at Calf Pasture Beach, however, where she did most of her work, and where on many occasions she and her father, veteran umpire Art Bobrowsky, worked together as a tandem.

In 1985, she added officiating basketball and volleyball to her resume and continued to do both also through 1996.

Meanwhile, her business career after college included several stops during the 1980s and early '90s, including Nash Engineering, Pitney Bowes in Stamford and the Easter Seal Society of Connecticut in upstate Hebron.

It was in 1992, however, that she made a major change in her life, going back to school at Wayne State University in Detroit to earn her Master's in Sports Administration. As part of her studies, Bobrowsky did an internship in 1993-94 with the Tigers' front office and helped create the team's first-ever community affairs department.

She impressed the Tigers' brass so much that upon graduating, the club hired her to join the department fulltime in 1995 as an assistant, moving up to coordinator in 1996, manager in 1997-98, and finally director of community affairs from 1999-2006. In that role, she supervised the club's community outreach activities and programs while coordinating events to raise funds for charitable causes in the Detroit metropolitan area.

The Detroit Tigers, incidentally, was the same organization that Art 'Ole' Olsen, Norwalk's first Major Leaguer, pitched for in 1922 and '23 and once struck out Babe Ruth.

While Olsen's career with the Tigers lasted just those two seasons, Bobrowsky was with the club for a total of 14 years before Major League Baseball came calling in 2006. That's when she came back East to New York City and accepted her current position as Director of Community Affairs with MLB and the Office of the Commissioner.

In addition to focusing on national and local community issues, Bobrowsky serves as a liaison and advisor to all 30 community affairs departments in baseball. She also directs the implementation of MLB's annual All-Star Game as well as postseason community initiatives.

Despite her demanding schedule, Bobrowsky still finds time to mentor young executives entering the world of professional sports, including a group known as Women in Sports and Entertainment (WISE). She also volunteers for an animal rescue organization in New York City, while in Detroit she served on several boards, among them the Michigan Jewish Sports Foundation (first female member), the Detroit Urban League, the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit, and she formed and served as president of the UConn Alumni Association Michigan Club.

And while she was still living in Connecticut, she served as director of the Connecticut Special Olympics state volleyball competition, and was a volunteer with the Saugatuck Valley Audubon Society.

Also while she was with the Detroit Tigers, Bobrowsky received the prestigious Henry Ford Hospital Clarence S. Livingood Award, which honors those whose efforts have most positively affected patients' lives at the hospital's ALS Clinic.

In 2011, Celia Bobrowsky was installed onto the Norwalk High School Alumni Association Wall of Honor.