

## *Bill Krause*



**B**ill Krause is a name synonymous with the sport of softball in Norwalk. And it has been for half a century now.

Even more so lately, Krause has been a Connecticut ASA District Commissioner for over 20 years, during which time he's brought over 100 tournaments to the city of Norwalk.

In fact, this past summer, he arranged for the city to host six tournaments – a record for Norwalk – including three state tournaments: the Men's Class B and the Women's Class C and D. The six tournaments were also the most of any town in Connecticut.

"We used to have a few," Krause said in an interview at the beginning of the summer. "But

then I started pushing to get the upstate teams down here. Now we have six, more than anybody. "We have the facilities," he added. "We've got two fields, we've got lights. It's a lot better than a lot of places and the teams from upstate like coming down here. We've kind've become the softball capital of the state."

Thanks in large part to Bill Krause, known to friends and softball players all over as "Ratsy."

"During the war, I was at the Westport YMCA taking some commando courses," he recalled. "One day we were in the pool and when I came out this guy, John Sullivan, looked at me and said, 'Boy, you look like a drowned rat.' That's how I picked it up and I've been known as Ratsy ever since."

He's also been known as one of the most influential figures in local softball almost as long.

Born in New York City on Christmas Day in 1928 ("I was an ornament under the tree," he says), Krause grew up in Westport and attended Bedford elementary and junior high schools, and then Staples High School. Soon after graduation, his love for softball began.

"I started playing as soon as I got out of high school in the late '40s," Krause said.

He even played second base for a softball team in the army while he was stationed at Camp Attebery, Illinois, and later in Germany in 1951 and '52. One of his teammates was future Dodgers catcher and 1969 New York Mets coach Joe Pignatano.

Upon returning home, Krause played for several Norwalk fast-pitch softball teams, including Jim Shields Eagles in 1954 where he was a teammate of pitching great Jimmy Marucci. One of Krause's greatest sports memories, he says, was getting two hits against a team from Baltimore off pitching great Gibby Waslowski.

During the '50s and early 1960s, Krause also played for Norwalk teams such as the Castro Convertibles, the Terrace Eagles and the Norwalk Eagles. He eventually became manager of the Norwalk Eagles for six years when the team played in the highly competitive Atlantic Seaboard League against the likes of the Raybestos Cardinals. Under Krause, the Eagles also won the Scranton, Pa., Tournament in 1962.

One of the players Krause managed with the Eagles was his brother-in-law, the late Sam Testa, former Norwalk High football coach.

Krause also played slow-pitch softball for a number of teams in his hometown of Westport such as the Avengers, the Outlaws and the C&D All-Stars.

When his playing days were over, Krause remained close to softball as an umpire, which he's continued doing for the past 42 years, most of those in Norwalk. And 15 years ago, Krause received the ultimate honor when he was inducted into the Connecticut ASA Softball Hall of Fame.

Growing up in Westport, Krause also played basketball for the YMCA Seniors and the 'Y' Juniors where two of his teammates were Junior Bieling and George Stanton. He went on to become a basketball official, working local games at all levels for a quarter of a century, and receiving the prestigious Bennie Issogna Award from his fellow officials.

Krause was also a football official from 1964 to 2003, and was instrumental in forming the Fairfield County Football Officials Association.

In addition to his many sports activities, Krause has also been active with the Masons Temple Lodge No. 65, the Prymid Temple Shriners, and the Westport PAL.

Now retired from the printing business and living in Norwalk, the 75-year-old Krause and his wife, the former Mary Testa, have two children and one grandson.