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Funeral services scheduled for Andy Gerick, World Series scorekeeper

Andy Gerick, the official scorekeeper and statistician of the Junior League World Series since its inception 27 years ago, has died.

Mr. Gerick, who battled cancer since early last year, passed away on January 23, 2008, in hospice at the Manor of Southgate. He was 69 years old.

Mr. Gerick's body will lie in state from 2 to 9 p.m. Friday, January 25, at Voran Funeral Home, 23750 Goddard Road, Taylor. The funeral is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, January 26, also at Voran.

Mr. Gerick was a postal worker and union executive who earned a bachelor's degree from Wayne State University and went on to another career in landscaping after his retirement from the U.S. Post Office. Prior to that, he served in the Marine Corp and worked at Great Lakes Steel, according to his ex-wife Sonja, who remained close to Mr. Gerick throughout his life.

Mr. Gerick coached their three sons in baseball and Little League football, Sonja Gerick said.

Mr. Gerick is credited with being the only person to see and record every pitch of the Junior League World Series. The championship baseball tournament for the best teams of 13- and 14-year-old players from around the world has been held annually at Heritage Park in Taylor since its inception in 1981.

World Series founder and director Greg Bzura said the entire World Series "family" would greatly miss Mr. Gerick, Bzura's friend of about 45 years.

"Cancer overwhelmed him," Bzura said. "It began in his colon and spread throughout his body. We all knew it was coming. It was just a matter when. Andy has always been a fighter. I think he lasted a whole lot longer than a lot of people thought he would."

Like Bzura and hundreds of others, all of Mr. Gerick's time in the press box was as a volunteer.

"I called Andy the official scorekeeper and statistician," Bzura said. "Any kind of statistic in the program book, you'll see 'stats by Andy.' And that's 27 years of it."

Bzura said Mr. Gerick kept score by hand and was not a believer in computers.

"Andy would joke that he didn't trust the computers," Bzura said. "He would audit the computer printouts. He prided himself on accuracy. It was so important to him."

Mr. Gerick is survived by three sons, Ron (Darlene), Steve and Jim, two grandchildren, Matthew and Marina, and two brothers, Larry and Thomas. His sons and daughter-in-law were part of his scorekeeping crew at the World Series.

"It's a major loss," Bzura said. "The only thing compensating is that he developed a crew. That crew is motivated. They actually covered for him at the last tournament, although he was there."

"The good part is a lot of that crew is family. It's not like they're going to go away."

Bzura said Mr. Gerick sometimes questioned how long they would continue to work hard to keep hosting the World Series.

"Those are some of my best memories," Bzura said. "We'd sit there and in a quiet moment, Andy would say, 'Greg, how long are we going to do this?' I'd tease him and say we were going to do it forever. He'd say, 'We can't do it forever.' And I'd say, 'Why not?' He'd say, 'We've gotta die some time.' And I told him he's not allowed to die. And then we'd just laugh."

"To see Andy of all people, pass away, well, it's like family."

Bzura said Mr. Gerick would be remembered during the 2008 World Series in August. He said a plaque will be placed in the Memorial Garden behind the press box at World Series Field. The garden honors the memory of longtime volunteers in the World Series and in the hosting Taylor South Little League.

The Gerick family has asked that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the Junior League World Series.



