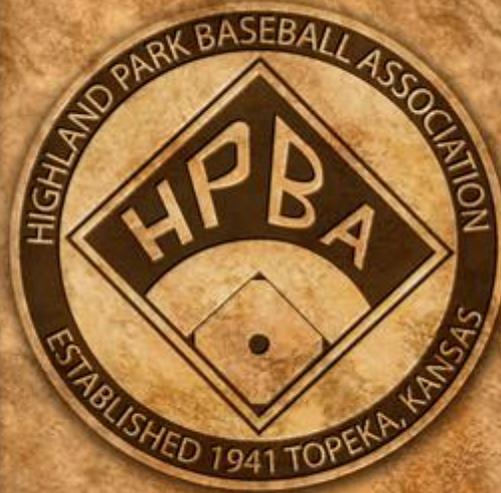


- 2015 INDUCTEE -



HPBA 75 YEARS

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION FOR THE LONGEST CONTINUOUS YOUTH BASEBALL PROGRAM IN SHAWNEE COUNTY WHICH IS OBSERVING ITS 75TH YEAR IN 2015. SINCE ITS INCEPTION, HPBA HAS SERVED THOUSANDS OF YOUTH, PRIMARILY FROM HIGHLAND PARK AND SOUTHEAST TOPEKA. NOW KNOWN AS THE TOPEKA BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION.

The Highland Park Baseball Association (HPBA) is a youth baseball organization that traces its origins to 1941. Throughout its 75-year history, the program has been sustained by the efforts of volunteers and parents committed to providing organized baseball playing opportunities for the youth of southeast Topeka. Embedded in its history is a persistent, uphill battle for adequate resources. Yet the program, in its various iterations, has endured as the longest continuous youth baseball program in Shawnee County.

The HPBA, which was recently expanded to become the Topeka Baseball and Softball Association, started as an informal effort by businessmen and community leaders in the Highland Park Boosters Club. Through the mid-1970s, its games were played on school diamonds—initially, the diamond at 28th and Indiana, and then the fields at 23rd and California. In the mid-1970s, the program relocated to city-owned Dornwood Park.

The late 1970s were crucial years. The Booster Club had been in decline and was no longer effective in coordinating the baseball effort. The Dornwood diamonds were only minimally equipped and maintained by the city, which made it difficult to attract volunteers and players. Two local legislators, however, took an interest and began to actively engage. Jim Parrish, then a state senator, became involved in the mid-1970s by volunteering his time and legal skills, and providing financial support. He later purchased land and donated it to the HPBA for addition of two new diamonds. Senator Anthony Hensley became active in the late 1970s as a team sponsor and coach. Parrish and Hensley remain members of the board of directors and are still active in the league's baseball programs.

Their involvement sparked a revitalization of the program. In 1980, the HPBA filed articles of incorporation and soon thereafter, achieved non-profit status. With the land donated by Parrish, the number of playing fields increased. Improvements were made in lighting, fencing, concession, and restroom facilities. Team sponsorships increased, as did youth, parent and volunteer participation.

Opportunity to participate has consistently been a HPBA hallmark. Every child who signs up is assigned to a team; every child gets playing time. Continuing to offer that opportunity is a goal shared by long-time president Mike Rosencutter, Parrish, Hensley, and countless others who have dedicated time, energy, and money to the organization.

Once again, however, the HPBA faces renewed challenges as it strives to become competitive with Topeka's other, more heavily-resourced youth baseball programs. Its future viability will depend on facility improvements planned by the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department, increased sponsorship contributions, and involvement by a greater number of committed volunteers.