



## WYATT DOWLING / WAWANESA INSURANCE WALLS OF FAME

### **John Jacob Neufeld 1942 – 2022 - Inducted in 2023 Category of Volunteerism**

John grew up in Grunthal, Manitoba, and four years into his marriage to Doris, he moved to Transcona to raise his family. From a young age, he developed a strong sense of community, hard work, love of music, team sports and charity. He embraced his new Transcona community by volunteering.

John was a founding member of the Knights of Columbus baseball league, which he operated for over 30 years. He played an integral role in the acceptance of female athletes in the league during that time. John's guiding principles were sportsmanship, patience, and creating a welcoming environment. For a \$20 bill, a child could play ball, get a jersey and a cap, receive a medal, and have a hotdog. Competition was secondary. Fellowship and sportsmanship were the priorities.



*Photo submitted by the family.*

John ran the baseball program for so long that some of the children he registered, coached and umpired would return to the league years later as coaches themselves, with their children equally benefitting from John's guidance and patience.

John's volunteering did not stop with baseball. He coached soccer, hockey and led cub scouts too. He was a dedicated volunteer at the Oxford Heights Community Club, where he helped flood the rink and warmed little toes.

As a parishioner of Blessed Sacrament, where his woodwork still adorns the church, he served pancakes and taught catechism. In the winter, Roland Michener Arena buzzed during hockey tournaments that he helped organize. He was also busy with the Knights of Columbus Christmas Hamper Program, which brought toys and Christmas goodies to families in need. John's work within the community endeared him to many and created lasting friendships.

John received the Knights of Columbus' Knight of the Year honour in 1984-85 and the City of Winnipeg honoured him by naming a street after him in 2011, however, if he could, he would tell you that his biggest reward was seeing a smile on a child's face while on the field or the ice.