

THE FIELD OF DREAMS

ESSAY

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The Field of Dreams was an iconic movie enjoyed by young and old, male and female. It was a good story with a strong cast that had you rooting for the main character, Ray Kinsella from the outset. He tried to turn his farm into an attraction that would draw paying customers and allow him to continue to keep his family farm and prevent the bank from taking it over. He is ridiculed for pursuing such a dream but he continues to hear a voice telling him "build it and they will come".

This year will be my 32<sup>nd</sup>. Consecutive year of senior softball and when I think back to my first year in 1992. I remember going out to the field for the first time in over 20 years and thinking this is my field of dreams. The film was made in 1989 and I wonder if it kindled me and others to pursue softball and our childhood dreams. My re-entry into softball was the result of a newspaper story about a new senior league and again I wonder the story was sparked by the movie.

That field of dreams thought has recurred a few more times. In 2019 I was fortunate enough to play for the national senior softball championship in Albuquerque NM. The venue was brand new and the fields made of astro turf, built specifically for the senior games. We were all amazed at the plush look of the fields and almost felt bad about playing on them with our spikes. Most of us were use to playing on poorly maintained dirt fields and more than one us mentioned these were fields of our dreams. It didn't take long for someone else to say "build it and they will come".

Our league in Wilmington turned 25 last year and has a host of original members. Many of us have hit the 80 year old mark and beyond. The league was divided between a younger group and older groups with some older talented players playing in the younger group and less talented younger players in the older group so there was a place for everyone. Two years ago we established a "legacy" league so those 80 and approaching 90 have a place to play. At this age the field of dreams is more than just a dream it is still a reality.

Recently I watched some of the legacy players and realized they were keeping in shape and being prepared to play at the next level which may be in the next dimension. They want to be ready for that field of dreams in the hereafter.