

January 9, 2008

Miami Lakes Commissioners
16121 Aberdeen Way
Miami Lakes, FL 33014

Re: Dick Hatcher
Co-Founder Miami Lakes Optimist Club

Gentlemen:

I have been a friend of Marilyn and Dick Hatcher for many years. Dick and I played sports together at Lake Worth High School in the 1940's. We were a small school but played large schools particularly in Miami where we played football and baseball against Miami Edison, Coral Gables, Miami Tech and Miami Beach. We also played Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Vero Beach and Sarasota. Dick was the right guard and I was the right halfback. He was an exceptional guard and one of the best in South Florida.

This carried on to our playing baseball for those years against the same opponents. He was in left field and me in center. In 1947 we had a great run beating almost every team in South Florida and were invited to the American Legion State Championship in St. Petersburg Lang Stadium. There were 18 teams. We were from the smallest town. It was double elimination. We lost our first game to Bradenton and required to play twice a day. We played for a whole week and beat every team and got into the finals with Jacksonville who had won the tournament three straight years. They beat us by one run in the bottom of the ninth. Two of their pitchers played in the Major Leagues for over ten years. One managed the Giants for fifteen years.

Dick played the greatest left fielder you could imagine. He had the ability to turn his back on a long ball and take it going away. He batted over 400 and threw out runners at home plate.

Dick had some opportunities to play professionally but was in love with Marilyn and declined. He stayed with baseball by being the coach for many years in the Miami Lakes Optimist Club and was an organizer of this great club which became a benefit to hundreds of young men who learned to play hard and handle both winning or losing with grace and confidence. I understand Don Shula and Coach Schnellenberger's sons played for him. I know they have their highest regard for him.

Sincerely,

Eugene F. Bie