



HILTON HEAD ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL

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Dr Moss and BOE:

On August 2015 the Seahawk community suffered a huge loss with the death of Ron Costello. He was "Mr Seahawk" and there was not an athletic team at this school since 1983 that he has not helped in one way or another. After his death and his funeral many of us from the Beaufort, Bluffton and Hilton Head Communities discussed ways to honor Ron for his many hours, years of service to our community. We thought it would be fitting to name the baseball field after him as baseball especially Seahawk baseball was at his heart. We are asking the board to consider renaming the HHIHS baseball field to "Ron Costello Field" .

On 1/14/16 Shawn Zink (athletic trainer and Blair Carson (Head Baseball Coach) presented to the HHIHS SIC that the baseball field to be considered to be named after Ron Costello. After their presentation the the HHIHS SIC unanimously approved the name change moving to the next level.

Here is an article from the Island Packet published a few days after his death that summarizes his impact on our community and Beaufort County as a whole

Article from Island Packet

Ron Costello, who spent 20 years volunteering for teams at Hilton Head High School after a long career furthering youth and high school sports around Beaufort County, died Thursday morning, according to former Hilton Head Island High School athletic director Greg Elliott.

Costello began volunteering for the Seahawks in the 1980s, serving dutifully in several roles: manning the public address system at football, baseball and basketball games; keeping statistics for the baseball and basketball teams; driving the school's cheerleaders to football games; and driving countless teams across the southeast.

"He's the unsung hero of our athletic program. Even more than I miss him as a friend, we'll miss the contributions he made to our athletic program and school," Hilton Head High athletics director Joe Monmonier said. "I can't put it into words. You always knew he'd be there. You knew he'd be there to meet the officials, he'd get there early to open the press box, he'd drive the kids and he'd treat them well. Sometimes, he'd even feed them, take them out to eat.

"But he wasn't just Ron the bus driver. He was at all the games, he did the timing, he did the scoring, he kept the books, he called The Packet after the games. For baseball, football and basketball games. He drove every one of our teams at some point."

An upstate New York native, Costello was a Marine Corps veteran who served in the Vietnam War. After being wounded, he was transferred to Beaufort Memorial Hospital in 1969 and stayed in the area after leaving the Marine Corps.

Costello ran sports leagues for the city of Beaufort's recreation department for 11 years, serving as the statistician and public address announcer for Battery Creek High School's baseball team during that same span.

In 1980, he started a brief stint as the athletics director for southern Beaufort County, helping expand existing sports programs and creating such programs as youth soccer and flag football.

In the years before his volunteer service at Hilton Head High began, Costello drove three elementary school bus routes each day and coached softball and volleyball at May River Academy where he met Dave Adams, now the Bluffton High School athletics director.

Costello would hire Adams in the summer as an umpire for recreation softball. In the fall Costello was a filmer for Adams' football team at May River.

"He would climb up a telephone pole with spikes to film practice from a little platform that looked like a deer stand," Adams said. "And back then, that video equipment wasn't small. But he'd never complain. He'd climb whatever he needed to climb."

As a bus driver, Costello was legendary.

In a 2005 *Island Packet* story, Adams recalled how after a game in Georgia in the mid-1990s, Costello managed to navigate the lost team bus to Tallahassee, Fla., where the team was to see a Florida State football game.

"He had been sleeping the whole time and was totally disoriented," Adams said. "He couldn't have known where we were.

"But he kind of looks up and says, 'Turn here.' Then, 'Turn here.' He had us make about five turns. Now, by this time, I thought Ron was just full of B.S., that he couldn't possibly know where we were going. We were on little, two-lane, unmarked roads. But then, on the next turn, we pull right up in front of Florida State's stadium. It was incredible."

Former Hilton Head High baseball coach Chris Wells said, "even in today's generation with smart phones and GPS, people would still call Ron Costello for directions."

In his days at Hilton Head High, he was a jack-of-all-trades.

"He would keep the clock, the book and do the (public address) at basketball games," Elliott said. "Any one of those is a one-man job. He did all three. The referee would say 'Greg, you need to get somebody else. One guy can't do all three of those things.' And I said, 'Ron can.' "

Wells said, even though Costello was cherished, it will take some time before the Hilton Head High community knows what it has lost.

"You're going to need an army (to replace him)," he said. "This time next year, they'll probably be saying 'I really didn't realize all the things Ron did for us,' even as appreciated as he is. We're all going to miss him. We're going to reflect and say, 'Oh my gosh, we never knew.' "

When he was enshrined in the Hilton Head High Athletic Hall of Fame in 2005, the notoriously private Costello made a rare public appearance during halftime of a Seahawks football game.

"I dread this," he said at the time. "I enjoy going in, and I'm honored. But I don't like all the attention. ... I'm kind of a private person. I guess I'm just kind of bashful when it comes to these kind of things."

When school was out, Costello wasn't sitting around. In addition to his work in rec sports, he was heavily involved in American Legion baseball, first in Beaufort and later on Hilton Head, performing the same duties he did for the Seahawks.

"He's not a coach. His kids didn't play in the program. But boy, he poured his heart and soul out to kids in the community all year round," Adams said. "Some of us, when we get home, after doing this all day, we kind of turn it off and don't think about it. Ron never turned off sports and kids and schools."

Costello was a longtime manager at Harris Teeter on the island, first on Main Street and then on the South end, before retiring. He later ran a U-Haul rental business and was part owner of Carolina Activities, his bus company.

In addition to Hilton Head High, Costello drove for just about every high school in the county at some point, as well as John Paul II and St. Francis Catholic schools. He was still actively volunteering and driving buses as of last year.

Costello had experienced health troubles in the past -- he underwent triple by-pass heart surgery in 2004 -- but Monmonier said he was unaware of any serious issues lately.

"Heaven got a good one today. I told Joe Monmonier, 'I don't know how you honor Ron, but he was Mr. Seahawk,' " Elliott said. "No one has done more for a school than what Ron did for Hilton Head High."

Here is a list of the ways Ron Costello contributed to HHIHS:

He is a member of the HHIHS Athletic Hall of Fame as a volunteer 2005

Volunteer stat keeper for all away football games since 1983

Volunteer PA and Scoreboard operator for varsity football home games since 1983

Volunteer scoreboard operator for varsity baseball games since 1983

Volunteer scorekeeper and stat keeper for our girls and boys basketball teams since 1983

Helped with the field of dreams baseball field upgrades in 2007.

Donated \$ to the school to help pay for the football scoreboard upgrade in 2013.

Thank you for considering Ron Costello for this honor.

Sincerely,

Joe Monmonier
Athletic Director
Hilton Head Island High School