

## Larry Gallagher Eulogy

In the final hours of Larry's time with us when Barb asked us to give the eulogy; we were beyond honored, honestly speechless. Barb stressed the need to keep it short – 10 minutes in length. Honored and privileged but very scared. I thought.... how could we possibly do this justice, for a man who touched so many people's lives in a positive manner? The stories are endless and the people he influenced are numberless. Where to begin? So, I started to read a few of his many evaluations. For those in attendance today, who've had the privilege of being evaluated by Larry, you know the detail, thoroughness, and passion which he provided. On one of my observations from a football game a number of years ago....one of the sections on the observation report is 'Appearance' this has to do with uniform, fitness, etc. Well at that time having white on your shoes was not as accepted as it is today...so my rating for appearance rating that day was a '1', with '10' being the best 😊

I was overwhelmed with the amount of information and emotions, so I went back to two important concepts that Larry would always stress – K.I.S.S (Keep it simple) and control what you can control

Simply, we came up with six letters and words which describe the man we all knew and cared for so much.

The first letter is L for **Loving**

**Loving** – Born January 14, 1940, TO ESTHER AND LAWRENCE GALLAGHER IN MINNEAPOLIS. HE HAD THREE SISTERS OPAL, CORAL, AND RUBY. THEY LIVED IN FRIDLEY FOR 2 YEARS AND THEN MOVED TO COLUMBIA HEIGHTS.

Larry's love FOR SPORTS began AT AGE 7. HE PLAYED FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL AND BASEBALL AT COLUMBIA HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL. HE GRADUATED IN 1957. HE HAD THE HONOR TO PLAY IN THE 1957 ALL-STAR FOOTBALL GAME. HE WENT TO THE U OF M WITH A FOOTBALL SCHOLARSHIP BUT TRANSFERRED TO AUGSBURG COLLEGE WHERE HE MAJORED IN BIOLOGY, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH. HE PLAYED FOOTBALL AND BASEBALL AT AUGSBURG. LARRY GRADUATED IN 1961.

LARRY AND BARB MET on JULY 9, 1960. THEY MARRIED ON AUGUST 10, 1963. THEY ADOPTED 2 CHILDREN, CHRISTOPHER at 2 months old on December 23, 1971, AND ANN at one year old from Korea on February 4, 1975

ANN and husband LEE married in 1999 and blessed Larry and Barb with two granddaughters, Grace who is now 19 and Laura who is now 17 years old.

Hello, my name is John Priester, I met Larry over 22 years ago, and like many of us, he was the first person to make a positive impact on me in my officiating journey. I'm very honored to be up here today. I know he is looking down upon us and would want us to celebrate his life. To Barb, Ann, and Chris, thank you for allowing me to spend time with him in his final days and hours. I will always be grateful for those final moments.

The second letter is E for **Enthusiastic**

**Enthusiastic** - LARRY, BARB, CHRIS, AND ANN ENJOYED TAKING FAMILY VACATIONS DURING THE SUMMERTIME, and of course, Larry would go to the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPORTS OFFICIALS (NASO) CONVENTIONS. They went to DALLAS (1983), ORLANDO (1985), ST. LOUIS (1986), SAN

FRANCISCO (1987), BOSTON (1988), AND WASHINGTON, D. C. (1990). Along with their family vacations, Barb had visited 49 states with Alaska being the last one. Barb tried and tried, and finally convinced Larry to go on an Alaskan cruise. To this day, this trip is one of Barb's fondest memories of their travels.

Larry never missed a clinic, training, tryout, observation, or meeting. His enthusiasm for officiating will never be matched. Many times, his enthusiasm was more than others could handle. In fact, there is a story of Larry and Legendary coach Jim Dimick. For many years, at St. Olaf College, they would host a clinic and of course Larry was at every single one of them. One year, while Coach Dimick was introducing Larry he said the following, "Larry is so good at what he does for umpires and umpiring that he should be on TV. I wish he was because then we could turn him off when we are tired of hearing him."

The third letter is **G** for **Generous**

**Generous** – There cannot be an umpire here today who either worked on the field with Larry or was observed and evaluated by him that doesn't know about his generosity. The number of comments that Larry could write about an umpire during a game were legendary. The time spent covering everything he wrote could last hours. As Ken Sargent recalls, he was fortunate, he thought, that the first time he worked with Larry was before he had ever observed him. And Larry was working the bases so he thought couldn't write anything down. They worked a game at Prior Lake's Memorial Park where the lights were on a timer. The game got done well before the time for the lights to go out. They were sitting at their cars and Larry is recapping the game. Ken found out Larry didn't need paper and pencil. 😊 The lights went out finally, and Ken figured that would be the end of it and would get to go home but Larry continued for at least another 20 minutes with just a streetlight there to illuminate them.

Larry wanted you to become the best umpire in the room, then turn to your partner and do everything you could to make him better than you. I know everyone here today is not an umpire, but for those who are the best way we can honor Larry is to carry this forward. Strive to be the best on the field and improve your partner off it.

Larry cared about each and every one he came in contact with. If you want to be a better umpire or person, be kind, friendly, a student, a teacher, a mentor, a mentee, gentle, firm, servant, thoughtful, a husband and a father. Be Larry.

The fourth letter is **E** for **Educator**

**Educator** - Larry started teaching in the North Saint Paul - Maplewood - Oakdale School District in 1963 and for 36 years HE TAUGHT PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH AND ALSO COACHED BASEBALL, BASKETBALL, FOOTBALL, VOLLEYBALL AND WRESTLING. HIS LAST 22 YEARS WERE AT TARTAN HIGH SCHOOL. Barb said that he was so busy being a teacher, coach, and official that he barely had time for her 😊. HE HAS ALSO BEEN PART OF THE MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE SINCE 1961 and SINCE 1997 HAS BEEN ONE OF THEIR BASEBALL CLINICIANS. LARRY ENJOYED WORKING FOR THE MSHSL AS AN UMPIRE-IN-CHIEF FOR OVER 20 YEARS FOR THE BASEBALL STATE TOURNAMENTS.

Larry's thoroughness could also lead to some humorous situations. Larry was observing a crew of umpires (Brian Mauer and Gordy Botcher). Larry had a commitment elsewhere, so he had to leave early. Brian could see him as he was leaving, pencil and pad still in hand, he would write something, take a few steps between pitches, write something again, take a few more steps,

write again and he did this all the way to his car. It was the educator, the teacher in him that gave him the ability to constructively criticize your work but leave you wanting to hang on to every word he said to get better.

The fifth letter is **N** for **Northwest Umpires**

**Northwest Umpires (NW)** – Larry was A MEMBER OF NORTHWEST UMPIRES AND MINNEAPOLIS OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION FOR 50+ YEARS. HE UMPIRED IN THE 1990 OLYMPIC FESTIVAL. IN 1988 AND 1990 HE OFFICIATED THE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL ALL STAR GAMES. HE ALSO UMPIRED IN 7 HIGH SCHOOL STATE TOURNAMENTS, SEVERAL CLASS A, B AND C AMATUER STATE TOURNAMENTS, SEVERAL MIAC TOURNAMENTS, THE 2008 NCAA DIVISION 3 Midwest Regional TOURNAMENT, and MANY AMERICAN LEGION STATE TOURNAMENTS. He held many positions on the Board of Directors. I can recall many conversations which got heated and tough decisions needed to be made. We would always ask him, “Larry, what would you do?” – And, in his calm and professional manner he would set us straight and would provide the needed guidance. You can be assured that Larry always thought of what was best for the organization and its members. Our organization will move on with very fond memories of Larry. There isn’t anyone that means more to the NW on our hats than Larry.

The sixth and final letter and is **D** for **Determined**

**Determined** – Larry strived to be perfect and would always say, “none of us has ever worked a perfect game!” The pitcher may throw a no-hitter or even a perfect game, but Larry would always have something for himself, the crew, or the officials involved to work on. LARRY WAS FORTUNATE TO BE SELECTED DURING THE 1979 MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL UMPIRE STRIKE TO UMPIRE 7 MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL GAMES AT METROPLITAN STADIUM WITH DETROIT AND CLEVELAND PLAYING THE MINNESOTA TWINS. In his final days, when Brandon and I got to watch a few innings of the World Series with him, from his house, he could still recall the crew members, the pitchers, the catchers, and specific pitches and plays – truly amazing. He was an encyclopedia of baseball knowledge. My six-year-old son was fortunate enough to have lunch with Larry and Barb earlier this year. When Larry’s health was declining, I told my son I was going to go see my friend, Larry, who needed some help. His response was, “oh, that guy who knows EVERYTHING about baseball?” – Yes, that’s the guy....

This lifelong determination was seen and felt by all that Larry interacted with. So much so, he was selected to at least 7 halls of fames and multiple awards. These include:

1. Northwest Umpires
2. Class A Baseball
3. Columbia Heights High School
4. Mpls Officials
5. North Star League
6. MN State High School League
7. MN Senior Sports Association
8. And a Legacy award from MYAS

So, in closing, these six letters, L-E-G-E-N-D, when individual are just small pieces, with no meaning, but when brought together, in the same manner as Larry brought people together, they form the word **LEGEND**

Larry, legends never die, they live forever in the hearts and minds of those they've touched and inspired.

Larry you are a true **LEGEND.....Loving, Enthusiastic, Generous, an Educator, a NW Umpire, and very Determined**

Larry is no longer in pain – he is at the good Lord's side.

I've been told there is baseball in heaven. I'm sure you're already there playing, coaching, umpiring, or evaluating. I'm sure your encyclopedia of baseball knowledge has grown. Save us a spot in the lineup, on the staff, or the umpiring crew!

Rest easy, Larry – We will miss you and we love you. As you would always say, PEACE.