

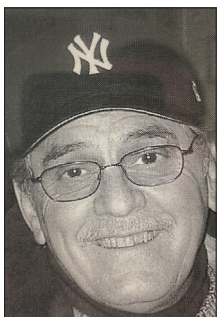
PLAY BALL!



Welcome to the new Gil Dionne "Hometown Field" at Sanford High School, a Legacy-funded project thanks to the Sheppard family.

Family preserves Gil Dionne's 'hometown' legacy at new softball field

It's the picture-perfect spring afternoon for a game. The sun is shining and there's not a cloud in the sky. The players are chattering away, and the rival fans are cheering on their teams. With a crack of the bat, the Sanford Spartans softball team takes the lead and the crowd goes wild.



Gil Dionne

It's an all-American scene here at the Gil Dionne "Hometown Field" on Alumni Drive at Sanford High School and Regional Technical Center. And Dionne's family — Scott and Michelle Sheppard, with daughters Madison and Megan — thinks Pepere would be proud.

"It's pretty awesome," said Scott, whose family donated \$10,000 to the Sanford Schools Legacy Foundation for naming rights to the new field, complete with new dugouts. "Just knowing we had a part of it is pretty special."

Gil Dionne was an active Sanford husband, father (to Michelle Shep-

pard), grandfather, friend and businessman, owning and operating Gil Dionne Realty for 30 years — "the hometown agency," he used to say. Gil was an active member of the community, volunteering his time with many town clubs and organizational committees. He played both ice hockey and softball on many different teams over the years, coaching both of his daughters in both softball and soccer, drawing from his background in baseball and hockey.

"He was a staple in the family, and he was always doing something for everybody," said Scott. "We lost him too young before he got to see his granddaughters play."

He's proud to know the gift benefits the community in general, and the softball program in particular.

"This is important because it helps give girls a better opportunity and experience with something to take pride in," said Sanford High Softball Coach Lindsay Tibbetts.

Sanford High School Athletic Director Gordie Salls said a good team gets better with the right opportunities.



Sanford pitcher Madison Sheppard strikes out another batter.

"It is imperative to our program to build and have the facilities we have," he said. "Without the generosity of the Sheppard family, we would be unable to do that."

Scott serves as the Sanford High School assistant coach, so he sees firsthand the impact of his family's gift.

"Softball is my two girls' favorite sport, so I can't think of a better way to honor his legacy."

Thank you to our Sanford Schools Legacy Foundation Board

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