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Perone and baseball a real love affair

Published: Thursday, March 03, 2011, 9:05 AM



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NEW SPRINGVILLE — Baseball and Gary Perone are synonymous.

The New Springville resident eats, sleeps and drinks baseball.



Photo courtesy of Gary Perone

That's why he was a logical choice to be honored as Man of the Year by the Greater New York Sandlot Athletic Alliance (GNYSAA) recently. The presentation was made at the 9th Annual Lou DeMartino Memorial ceremony at John Jay College

Perone, who served as Assistant General Manager of the Staten Island Yankees in 2005-06 and is currently the Director of New Business Development for the Brooklyn Cyclones, has been involved in youth baseball since graduating from St.

"It was an honor to receive the award because of what kind of man Lou DeMartino (the long-time head coach at John Jay College) was," Perone explained. "He was a great baseball man who treated every player and every person fairly."

In his 'spare' time, Perone is an associate scout for the New York Mets and is the founder of the Professional Baseball Scouts Hall of Fame, proud member of The New York Hot Stove League, Professional Baseball Players of America Association, Ed Randall's Bat for the Cure, and he is the head of the Long Ball Club. Recently, the president of Minor League Baseball appointed him to the Diversity Board.

"We look to Gary as Mr. Baseball in New York City," said Victor Feld, who along with Chicago Cubs scout Bill Blitzer, head the Greater New York Sandlot group which is 27,000 strong. "There's probably not a person in New York that does as much for youth, high school, college and sandlot baseball than him."

With the support of the Cyclones' organization, Perone makes the field available for the GNYSAA Classic every summer (this year it's on Aug. 21). The game always features many of the elite players in New York City. This year they will square off with a national team from Puerto Rico.

"Last year we had nearly 7,000 fans at the game," Feld said.

Perone and his wife Ellena have four children, Nicolette (14), Dominique (10), Alexandria (6), and Gary John (4), who keep him busy when he's not fully focused on baseball.

Perone grew up on the sandlots of New York where he played for teams like Bergen Beach, the Cadets and the 62nd Precinct, and still believes that every kid in the five boroughs should have the opportunity to compete.

"Staten Island is a bit of a different story because there are so many facilities, and adults willing to teach," said Perone. "But there is a lot of work to do in the other boroughs. We are always looking for baseball people to teach the game the correct way.

"That's why I believe in the Long Ball Club," he added. "We bring in minor league players who know how the game should be played. I'll get on my soapbox anytime, and anywhere, to help keep baseball on top."

Along with his work in youth baseball, Perone is very active in making sure kids have access to the Cyclones, and the minor-league franchise has a program that gives money back to various organizations.

"Our Sandlot Hall of Fame (at the Cyclones' MCU Stadium in Coney Island) will be expanded and improved this year," Perone added. "And we're working on getting John Franco as our guest. We

had Carl Erskine, Tommy LaSorda and Wally Backman, and we feel that John really is the picture of youth baseball in New York."

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