

JOAN JOYCE

"I threw to him about 10 minutes. He fouled off one or two pitches, but that's all. He threw his bat down and walked away."

— Joan Joyce - On pitching to Ted Williams

Joan Joyce was born in Waterbury on August 1, 1940. Her fabled achievements in women's softball with the Raybestos Brakettes in the 1950s and 1960s are unparalleled to this day. The team was the best in the nation, many years the best in international competition and she was their leader, winning 8 MVP Awards in the playoffs while they won 12 national championships. She also led the Orange, California Lionettes to a championship.

Her amateur career statistics, starting at age 13, included 507 pitching wins with just 33 losses, 123 no-hitters, 33 perfect games, an 0.19 ERA, 6,648 strikeouts in 3,972 innings and a lifetime batting average of .327.

With her "Slingshot" 116 miles-per-hour fastball, riser, drop, knuckleball, screwball and change-up, she was almost unhittable. The New York Times said she was "literally a living legend to her own colleagues and most of her opponents as well." In Great Women Athletes of the 20th Century she is recognized as "the finest women's softball player of all time." Joyce was an Amateur Softball Association All-Star for 18 consecutive years; the streak stopped only when she turned

professional. She helped establish the International Women's Professional Softball Association, served as its commissioner, and as player-manager and part owner of the Connecticut Falcons led them to four championships.

She was proficient at many sports. She was named to the AAU All-American basketball team three times, played on the Ladies Professional Golf Tour, excelled in volleyball at Crosby High School and in amateur leagues and competed against the best in bowling after just taking up the sport.

She was the first woman honored with a Gold Key from the Connecticut Sports Writers Alliance in 1974 for her outstanding achievements. In 1983, she was elected to the National Softball Hall of Fame, in 1989, to the Women's Sports Foundation Hall of Fame, in 1991, to the Hank O'Donnell Sports Hall of Fame and in 1997 to the Connecticut Sports Museum Hall of Fame.

The name of Joan Joyce is synonymous with women's softball. She was the best in the world.

