

Ballfield to be named in honor of longtime coach

■ John Weingart appeared before the Hiawatha City Commission Monday evening to request that the ballfield at Noble Park be named " Paul Rockey Field" in honor of the memory of the longtime American Legion manager and coach.

(KNZA)--A Hiawatha ballfield will be named in honor of the memory of a longtime coach and community volunteer.

John Weingart, speaking on behalf of a group of residents, appeared before the Hiawatha City Commission Monday evening to request that the ballfield at Noble Park be named "Paul Rockey Field."

Paul died May 26th at the age of 63.

Weingart says Hiawatha baseball was a major part of his life. " Paul spent the last 38 years involved in Hiawatha baseball programs in someway. He started in 1980 by coaching little league baseball and was a member of the youth baseball board for many years. In 1993, Paul became involved in the American Legion baseball program by coaching."

Weingart says Paul spearheaded the renovations of Noble Park at its former location, where the Hiawatha Middle School is currently located, and as a result secured a state American Legion tournament in Hiawatha. " The field became an icon among baseball fields in northeast Kansas and area teams wanted to come and play on it."

When the park was relocated, Weingart says Paul and several volunteers cut and moved the sod from the old park location to its new location to save the city money.

Weingart says the ballpark became Paul's dream. "The hours and labor he spent on this project are almost unbelievable for a volunteer. He actually took Friday's off (from his job) so he could work three full days at the ballpark. He designed equipment for the field and put a lot of his own money into the field."

The Commission voted to have a resolution prepared for their approval making the ballfield name change.

On hand at the meeting were former players, coaches, Hiawatha American Legion representatives and members of his family.

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