

# Athlete Pat Gottsch put aside baseball for agribusiness and family

**By Christopher Burbach / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Tuesday, October 14, 2014 1:00 am**

Bernard G. “Pat” Gottsch played his way into the St. Louis Cardinals farm system, then made his mark in farm fields, agribusiness and small-town life in his native Elkhorn.

Gottsch, who died last week at 89, grew up in Elkhorn. He played baseball on the Elkhorn town team, said a son, Patrick Gottsch.

“He was a good pitcher and a great hitter,” Patrick Gottsch said. “He could play any position.”

While serving in the U.S. Army in World War II, Pat Gottsch played in the European Theater of Operations World Series, the younger Gottsch said.

After the war, Pat Gottsch earned a shot in the St. Louis Cardinals minor league system. He hit .348 for the Class D Carthage (Missouri) Cardinals in 1948, according to Baseball Reference.

“He was working his way up through the farm system when he broke his leg,” Patrick Gottsch said. “He decided it was time to start farming and raise his family.”

Pat Gottsch returned to Elkhorn, where his father, Arthur, was mayor from 1958 to 1972.

With his brothers, Pat Gottsch started Gottsch Brothers Oil and Feed. He grew corn and raised cattle on a farm outside Elkhorn, and had a feedlot as well as two other farms. The main farm, since sold, is now Indian Creek Golf Course, Patrick Gottsch said.

“He was a really hard worker,” said Patrick Gottsch, founder of RFD-TV and chairman of Rural Media Group.

Pat Gottsch also helped young people play the game he loved. He coached baseball in Elkhorn for many years. He coached in the Milwaukee Braves tryout camp in Rushville, Nebraska, in the 1950s.

In Elkhorn, he also was known for joining regular pinochle games with card-playing friends and for his practical jokes, Patrick Gottsch said.

He said his father and a friend once rode their horses into the Circle B bar.

“They rode right up to the bar and ordered a beer,” Patrick Gottsch said. “I think they got banned for a while after that.”

Pat Gottsch retired from farming in 1997 and moved into town. He remained a lifelong fan of the Cardinals and the New York Yankees.

The Gottsch family will establish an agricultural studies college scholarship at Elkhorn High School in Pat Gottsch's name.

In addition to Patrick Gottsch, survivors include Pat Gottsch's wife, Charlotte; son Mickey Gottsch; and daughters Toni Korpela, Tammy Hill and Terri Gottsch; all of Omaha.

Funeral services were Saturday at St. Patrick Catholic Church.

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