

"The Real Thing..."

The Life and Times of Patty Harsch

In her words....

I start drinking Diet Coke at 5am each morning. I'm "old school" and still love to read our local newspaper in the early hours of the day. I have 3 dogs (Bubba, Kona, and Jesse), one "Granddog" (Mox) and one "Grandkitty" (Reymond). I love my job at Triple Crown Sports where I've had the privilege of working on everything from soccer, slow pitch softball, fast pitch softball, youth baseball, college basketball and college placement events to starting a Training and Development program to enhance the development of our just under 50 full time employees. We market and manage sports events at Triple Crown and my job takes me to incredible places like Central Park in New York City (we run a fast pitch event there), the Moon Palace in Cancun, Mexico (we run a college basketball tournament there), Myrtle Beach, South Carolina (we run a national youth baseball tournament there), and many, many, more destination cities



Above: "My first softball team. I'm the one fourth from the left in the back row. The coach with dark hair is my Mom!"

Left: Patty (center) with older brother Dan and younger sister Kim

Bottom: All in the family!

From left: Patty, daughter-in-law-to-be Alisha, son BJ, daughter Jamie and partner in life and softball, Terri Coomer

where I get to spend time at a ball-park or a basketball court with people that are enjoying the heck out of themselves playing, coaching, or watching their kids play a sport.

I try to fit more into every day than I should (usually makes me late for just about everything).

I lost both of my parents to cancer before they were 68 years old and miss them both tremendously each and every day, but see them both in the legacy they left my kids....my daughter's love of music and my son's love of gambling....ha!....love you Mom and Dad! My favorite food for the first 47 years of my life was McDonald's (twice a day), but ate my last cheeseburger and fries there on July 7, 2009 as this was the day that I was diagnosed with Celiac Disease



and had to remove anything that contains gluten from my diet (230 days now of no McDonald's...but who's counting?). McDonald's revenues have significantly dropped since that day in July, because all of my amazing friends and my wonderful family have stopped eating there in support of me and this Celiac thing! I thought I'd mention this because there's got to be somebody out there with the time, money, and energy to work on a gluten-free McDonald's concept! In any case...Wendy's has become my new favorite drive-through fix, as their chili is gluten-free and their Diet Coke rocks.

Speaking of my friends and family, I am surrounded by some of the best people on earth. My co-workers, my teammates, my best friends, my younger sister and her family (Kim, San Diego), my older brother (Dan, Larned, Kansas), my son (BJ, 23) and his fiancée Alisha, my daughter (Jamie, 20), and my significant other, Terri.....I am so lucky to have you all in my life. You challenge me, you support me, you teach me, you wipe my tears when I'm sad, you laugh with me, but most of all, you make me appreciate and cherish every day that I have on this earth with you because you have taught me the true meaning of 'live, love, laugh'. You inspire me with all of your beautiful stories of challenges and achievements and you make me want to work hard on being the best that I can be.

I've played slow pitch softball in well over 100 cities, including Meeker, Colorado and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. I am a softball addict and everyone knows it. I love softball. For me, waking up on the morning of a "game day" is much the same feeling as waking up on Christmas morning. This has held true from the time I first took the field playing organized softball in Lakewood, Colorado (fastpitch in 1971) to just last September when I woke up in Orlando, Florida at the USSSA World tournament. Opening my eyes to another amazing day that God has provided, looking forward to spending quality time with family and friends, and anticipating what might be in those shiny packages under the tree (or within



the crisp confines of any ballpark in the world).

I started playing in my yard when I was 6 with a borrowed glove and a wood baseball bat that my grandpa gave me. We played with whoever showed up that day, all hours of the day. First base was a tree, second base was a dried patch of grass in the neighbor's yard, third base was the drain pipe on the corner of our house, and home plate was the center section of cement on the sidewalk that led up to our front porch. When I was 9, my Mom and Dad signed me up for the Alameda Girls Fastpitch Association in Lakewood, Colorado. My Mom was the coach and our uniforms consisted of short sleeve sweat-shirts and jeans. My Dad was my biggest fan. He met me with a Coke (could afford the calories back then) as I was coming off the field for every game I can remember from



*Top: Pitchers Softball Club - one of the classiest acts and most respected teams on any field, at any time.
Middle left: Retro Patty!
Middle right: Patty and Terri accept the 2007 Colorado USSSA Team of the Year Award for Pitchers Softball Club.
Bottom: Terri and Patty hanging at the ballpark between games...where else?*

when I was 9 years old to when he used to travel an hour and a half to watch my slow pitch league games when I was in my mid 30's! I have a "softball bucket list" of which many of the items have been crossed off. I've had the good fortune of playing on a women's team and coed teams that have allowed me to cross off many of these items.....things like a Triple Crown World Championship, USSSA team of the year, Triple Crown and USSSA state championships, travel all over the United States and Mexico, deep friendships in these same places, and taking the field with both of my kids. But there is one elusive item...a USSSA World Championship, that's still on the list. We've come close - 2nd in C and 4th in B - but we're still chasing it. We'll try again this year with our Pitchers women's team, complete with a roster of 21 year old fast pitch players, 30 year old former All American fast pitch players, and 40-50 year old "seasoned veterans" of the game of slow pitch. Terri runs our team as a player/coach and we take pride each year in putting a team of women together with a passion for the game, great integrity on and off the field, mad softball skills, and an ability to have fun wherever we go. This team has existed for over fifteen years now, traveling the state of Colorado and various ballparks in America on our quest to be the best we can be. Keep your fingers crossed (and take it easy on us if we happen to come up against you) that we win the ring sometime in the near future, while this old gal still has the ability to take the field with the youth and talent that surrounds me (all of them my friends and in some cases, my family).

I love bowling, golfing, walking, yoga, taking ground balls and fly balls, spinning (bikes), the sun, and playing Double Diamond slot machines at any casino I happen to wander into.

I love watching all sports, but especially the ones my family members are playing. My sister and her family and their fantastic volleyball skills (San Diego State University), my son BJ and his amazing baseball career that spanned through an All-Conference senior season at Concordia University (he now has a new sport we're getting hooked on called Drift Car Racing), my daughter Jamie and the unbelievable journey we're still on with her softball career at the University of Northern Colorado, Terri's Hall of Fame career (USSSA and Triple Crown) in slow pitch softball including women's and coed (plus her new found love of racquetball and although it's not a sport...playing the guitar).

I love the Denver Broncos, the Colorado Rockies and the Denver Nuggets, although I'm just as happy watching any one of the beautiful children of any of my friends participating in their favorite sports.

I live my life by the "you get what you put in" motto and try not to ever waste even one single moment (which is again why I am usually late for everything).

I love the town that I live in (Fort Collins, Colorado) and the little white house with blue trim that we own. I appreciate living in this country and the never ending opportunities that life offers. Green is my favorite color. American Idol, Grey's Anatomy and Private Practice are my favorite TV shows.

I love Friday nights because Terri and I do our best to try a new restaurant (with a gluten free menu option) each week and then chase that with a movie. I also love Monday nights because Terri goes to the movie theatre on her way home from work and brings me a large bucket of popcorn and a large Diet Coke. I have a large collection of tennis shoes and will never wear sweatpants that do not match or are not the same brand as the shoes I am wearing. I refuse to cave to technology and still keep a black Day Timer calendar by which I manage my life, along with three different hand written lists kept in highly visible places. I take pictures of everything which annoys my family but is worth it to me when years later I see them smiling at a picture I took one day when they were annoyed I took it. I am a big "people watcher" and can't get enough of learning about what makes people tick.

I grew up in Lakewood, Colorado where I attended Tot College pre-school, Green Mountain Elementary, Dunstan Junior High, Green Mountain High School, Red Rocks Community College, Metropolitan State College, and then finished my college degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. GO BIG RED! I'm honored to have been involved with so many amazing parent groups as my kids worked their way through elementary school, junior high, high school and college and currently enjoy my affiliation with the Colorado Women's Sports Fund Association, the CHAMP (Character in Athletics, Make it a Priority) scholarship committee, the University of Northern Colorado MOB (Moms and Dads of Bears), and running a fund raiser softball tournament for our women's team in Steamboat Springs, Colorado called the Mountain Magic over the 4th of July weekend (call me if you'd like to put your team in!).

I'm ecstatic at what I've experienced in life for my first 48 years and can't wait for what the next 48 will bring. Thank you to Softball Magazine for this opportunity to share my life with you all and if I haven't met you already, I hope to meet you at my next tournament stop. I'll be the very average pitcher with the visor and gray hair, the purple shirt with the Pitchers logo on the front and the number 1 on the back and the biggest smile in the park because I'm doing what I love (I'll more than likely also have a Diet Coke in my hand or in the dug out with me).

from Ann Marie Rodrigue...

Personally I have never ever known anyone to have such an infectious love and enthusiasm for the game and back that up with a lifetime dedicated to its promotion and success. Patty's passion for the game seems to start before sun up and end well beyond sundown each and every day. Her genuine enjoyment and enthusiasm for a game well played, a timely hit, or a heads up play is evident whether you are a teammate or opponent. It's just a downright "Love of the Game". Her dedication is inspiring and lessons learned from being around her in the game carry well beyond the lines of the ball-fields.

from Krista Judge...

Patty Harsch = All or nothing attitude, Motivating, Hard worker, Knowledgeable in life and softball, Leader on and off the field, Role Model, Funny and fun to be around, Caring, Organized, Non – Judgmental, unselfish, true teammate.

Patty Harsch has been an influence in my life from the day that I met her. She is such an amazing person with a positive outlook on life. Patty will always find the good in every bad situation and is a positive person to be around.

Family comes first in Patty's life. With two wonderful children in her life, BJ and Jamie, she always finds time to play slow pitch softball. Patty was at every game that her kids ever played in and still found time to play slow pitch, work, play slow pitch, work some more and maintain the relationships in her life. She cares sincerely about everyone in her life and will go to the end of the earth for anyone. Terri is Patty's partner and with both of their crazy lives, they always find time to keep their relationship healthy and happy.

Patty loves the game of slow pitch softball more than

anyone I know. She works hard in the off season and continues to improve. She leads our Pitchers softball team on the field, in the dugout and in the community. Everyone at the ball park knows of Patty and she can't walk in to any complex without having a conversation with someone. Patty is the face of slow pitch softball and will forever be looked up to.

My favorite quote from Patty is: "We do not stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing." This sums up Patty's amazing dedication to the game of slow pitch softball.

P = Positive; A = Awesome Attitude; T = Tremendous Teammate; T = Tenacious; Y = Young at Heart
H = Hard Worker; A = Always Organized;
R = Role Model; S = Strong Willed; C = Caring; H = Honest



from Jamie Juelfs...

The woman that is being featured in the piece is very close to my heart and she is a big part of who I am. Patty Harsch is my mother. Ever since I was little, I was at ballparks all around the state and nation watching my mom play softball. Now to most kids this would seem like a punishment and at some times it was, but to me it was a life experience. I looked up to my mother and she knew that and she used the softball field to teach me life lessons throughout her career.

Watching my mom on the softball field was like watching an art form. The way that she carried herself and never lost her cool was astonishing to watch. It is hard to stay composed when you care about something so much, but my mom always did and she never let anyone get the best of her. One life lesson that my mom showed me on the diamond was respect. My mother respects everyone and gives her best to anyone that is willing to accept it. My mother is someone that you can count on when you step on the field and you know that if you are playing with her she is going to give you everything she has. My mom doesn't judge or get upset when mistakes are

made, she simply looks at you and says "it's okay, I am going to get you another one, me and you." She makes you a better player just by being on the field with her.

Off the field, my mom has piled up so many accomplishments that they are hard to count, but the one thing that my mom has done that amazes me, day in and day out, is how she helped build slow-pitch softball in Colorado. My mother started with Triple Crown many years ago and ever since she has given passion, commitment, and pride to slow-pitch softball. I have never seen an individual put forth so much effort into one thing. She wouldn't rest until she knew that everything was perfect and that everyone was taken care of. My mom never missed a detail and never blew anything off. She was the first one to the field and the last one to leave, and believe me I know this because I was always the one whining about how I wanted to leave. Now I know why she had to stay so long and she also taught me another life lesson, hard work. Now, I get to see first hand how all of her hard work has paid off. It has paid off in the fact that when my mom steps into a ball park everyone knows her and loves her. She



from BJ Juelfs...

My mom has had me surrounded by softball since I can remember. My sister and I practically grew up at ball parks across the country. Both my sister and I played baseball/softball at the collegiate level and we owe our success to the examples, lessons, and experiences given to us by our mother and how she played the game.

She is one of the best leaders I've ever known and her sportsmanship and class is second to none. Quit is a word that's not in her vocabulary and I have yet to meet a player in diamond sports that has a passion greater than hers. With all that being said, she was still a mother first and at all costs, which makes all her achievements in softball seem that much greater to me because the game never came before her family.

She made almost every game that her kids played in, from T-ball to college and has spent the last seven years traveling the country to watch us play in college. One time she drove eighteen hours across the country to St. Louis, Missouri to catch the last two innings of my first college game.

She's taught my sister and I (and so many others) to respect the game, to set goals, to be leaders, to be students, and that we do not stop playing because we grow old, but we grow old because we stop

playing.

On or off the field there is no one else in this world with the caring heart and fierce passion of Patty Harsch.

I am so lucky and blessed to have had a role model like my mom.

is respected not only in the state of Colorado but around the nation. She has built an empire and for that she should be recognized. My mother, Patty Harsch is a teacher, friend, co-worker, mom, wife, and player. Throughout her career she has showed me how to be the best at all of them.

Thank you, Mom, for teaching me how to be unstoppable.

from Terri Coomer...

As an athlete and a coach for a women's team in Colorado for the past eighteen years, I have come in contact with many who are truly ambassadors of the game of slow pitch softball. However, none compare to Patty Harsch.

Being an ambassador for the game requires many things such as being a player, coach, expressing love for the game, sportsmanship, and most importantly in my eyes....class.

It's truly an honor for me to write in honor of Patty for many reasons, but none more important to me than she is someone that all of us players of the game should truly look up to as an ambassador for the sport.

In all my years of knowing and playing with Patty (sixteen years), I have never met another person that gives everything to the game she loves so much. She is the ultimate competitor, teammate and friend. She wants to win all the time, but if she doesn't, the class in which she competes is unmatched.

Patty has passed this tremendous quality that she possesses on to both of her kids that have and are playing at the collegiate level (baseball and fastpitch). She never does anything half way.

I have worked at the side of Patty when she was the Director of Slow Pitch softball for Triple Crown Sports. I can



honestly say that I have never met someone who doesn't like or respect Patty.

I am so pleased that Softball Magazine is doing this expose' on Patty. She has committed her life to the game of softball and no one is more deserving of this tribute.

Patty was recently inducted into both the USSSA and the Triple Crown Halls of Fame and there is no other pitcher in the state that I would rather have on my team. Not because she's a Hall of Famer, but rather because of the character, professionalism, knowledge, competitiveness and class in which she plays...a true ambassador.

from Kim Bird...

Although most softball folk know my sister, Patty Harsch, through the diamond sport or Triple Crown Sports... I know her as my kind hearted, always positive, enthusiastic, ever encouraging and supportive big sister.

Born in Denver, Colorado and raised in the Lakewood/Green Mountain area of Colorado, my sister's childhood was not so easy. Born to two chain smoking, alcoholic parents and a Mother diagnosed as a bi-polar manic depressive, Patty had many adult issues and every day burdens placed on her to manage at a very early age. BUT, although our parents did not always make the best of choices, our family love and fun was always present in our lives. I feel this ongoing love thrives in my sister's heart each and every day in her world of softball and at her work.

As a result of her childhood, Patty escaped into sports and academics, ultimately thriving in both. With the encouragement and help of teachers, coaches and life mentors through the years, Patty flourished in her high school years. Earning a spot in the National Honor Society and lettering in eight out of nine sports as a three sport athlete, the natural leader in Patty began to flourish.

Unselfishly sacrificing her first two years of college both academically and athletically by attending local Junior Colleges, she chose to stay at our home to keep my life on track and stable due to the ongoing instability in our home. By continuously giving me her time and efforts, Patty made my college dreams come true by always being MY stabilizing force. Because of my sister's ongoing efforts, I was able to receive a full ride DI volleyball scholarship to my dream school of a top 3 team in the Nation.

After making my college dream come true, Patty then pursued her life long dream of attending the University of Nebraska and thrived as an honor student in the Business Department there.

An amazing mother of two and a dedicated spouse, my sister Patty has

developed a life skill set which naturally 'jelled' her passion of softball with her seventeen year employer Dave King and Triple Crown Sports in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Dedicating her life passion to Triple Crown Sports over the years, Patty continues to improve her job skills with the support of the grassroots company by attending continuing education courses when she can. Last year she was accepted in to the Harvard School of Business completing a week long intense business course with various business



leaders from all over the world. Since our father had attended Harvard, Patty's dream was to someday attend the school as well.

While my sister's relentless dedication to the sport of softball continues through her playing and her every day work, I get to experience her every day as my big sister who loves and cares for me and my family with her incredible ability to make any life situation work, while always putting others first and herself second. Patty's personal characteristics and spiritual gifts include: Honor, loyalty, trustworthiness

and unselfishness to all she knows and is surrounded by. Those personal traits make her who she is today, but these traits are also within the heart and the mind of the big sister I have always known. Patty, unflappably, is a 'what you see is what you get person'. A fun loving, caring person and friend that everyone always wants to be around. That is why I have always called her 'the magnet.'

So, the next time I do get to see my sister... it will inevitably be somewhere in America on a softball field!

from ISA Director Nancy Dillion...

Patty Harsch is a wonderful person whom I had the chance to first meet over the phone and then in person the same year about 10 years ago.

'P' to me, as most of her friends know her by, is a wonderful person, body, mind and spirit. She has love of life and her family. Those of us who know her, know she makes this world a better place to be in. She has a love of softball and passion for life not like many I know.

Family to P has always come first and I am glad to have her as part of my extended family as well. She has the love of a sport and she chooses to spread that love around to anyone who will listen. I have many times told her that if my husband and I can only do half the job raising our son Jarred as she and Terri have raising their two children, then we would be good parents and he a great son. The way she will help anyone in need is inspiring to me. Personally, she knows how it feels to lose someone near and dear to her heart. She was such a great person to just listen while my husband was going through cancer. She has always supported and lent a hand in raising money to help fight cancer, as she knows the loss it had on her own life. P comes up with great ideas to help fight the cause that is near and dear to us both, whether it be in a fund raising project or just an ear to help you through it, she is always there.

P has a great personality and I can promise you this, she is always in a good mood, nothing seems to dampen her spirit. A rare jewel is hard to come by these days! She has spent countless time in or around a ball park, all the time making sure her children were always first. She is very aware of daily things we need to be doing or making sure a parent knows all they should in helping their child find a way to use their God given talent in order to get into a college whether it be by grades or by a sport their child excels in. She will guide parents in a way to make sure they and their child know all they can about college and what is going to be best for their child in the future.

While I did not get to meet her parents, I know this much, they would be very proud of her and all she has done to help others - all the time having fun in the sport of softball. She has built up many programs only to hand them off to someone else and to know in her heart-of-hearts they will succeed just as she did in them. There is no selfishness with P. She will always do what is best to help another, something we could all learn to do better in this world.

Met her through softball, but she has become more than just a friend, she is like a sister to me. Someone who I know has made a difference in this world and is not ashamed to show her passion for life. Even if we do not work together much anymore, we stay in contact and that is what a family does... at least our family.

from Chris Hutton...

Patty Harsch - Absolutely INSPIRING! When I think of Patty Harsch, I envision softball, softball, softball, so it is very appropriate for Softball Magazine to do a feature on someone who has given so much to this wonderful game.

When Patty was inducted into the USSSA Hall of Fame as Female Softball Player of the Year two years ago (her life partner and best friend, Terri Coomer, was inducted with the same honors this past year), I remember the speech she gave and the recognition she gave to so many people, saying that "they inspired her." Well, little does Patty know just how much she "inspires" all of those that are around her and she has contact with.

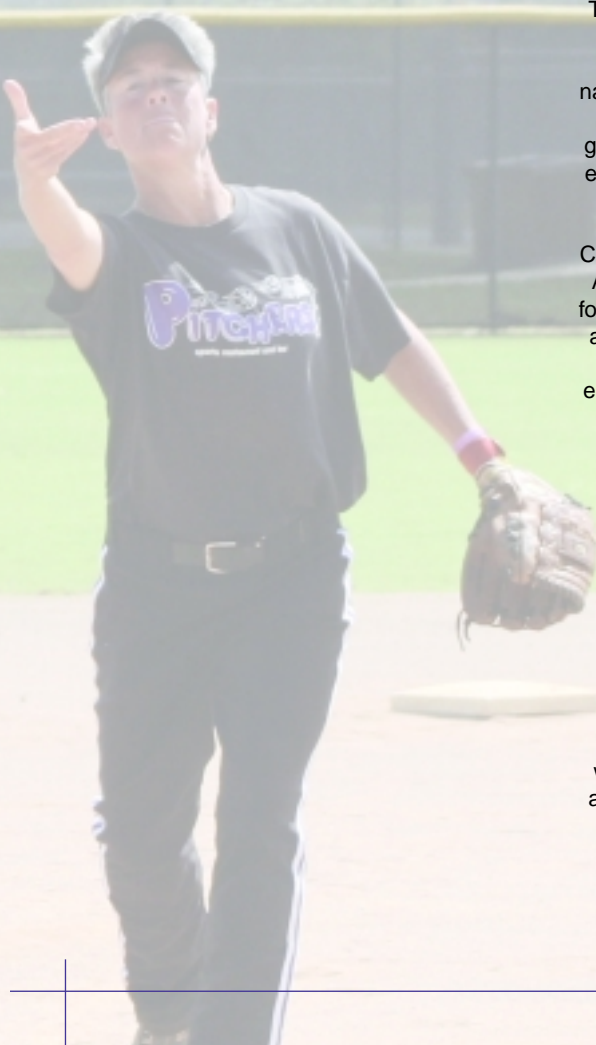
There are very few people that she comes into contact with that their second meeting isn't started with a big, genuine hug. I have never felt so honestly respected by anyone more than Patty. This inspires me.

She is the pitcher on our women's slow pitch team (Pitchers from Colorado) and every year we pick up one or two more DI fast pitch softball players who are looking for a competitive slow pitch team to play on. Despite the 20-25 year age gap, Patty accepts these youngsters right away and there is an instant respect for Patty and the experience she possesses in the game of slow pitch. Patty's leadership on and off the field inspires me.

The fact that she works at Triple Crown Sports and is surrounded by people that organize and schedule softball tournaments throughout the country is testimony for her love of the game - she loves to see others enjoying it as well. This inspires me.

She is involved with the Colorado Women's Sports Fund Association, making it possible for girls/women of all ages to be able to financially afford to stay involved in the activities they enjoy. Patty volunteering for this Association and taking time to assist others... inspires me.

Patty has two children, BJ and Jamie and both have had great success at the high school and college levels in both softball and baseball. BJ and Jamie have had the fortunate experience of having a parental role model that supports and encourages them in all that they do. Patty inspires me to be the kind of parent whose kids look up to them on and off the field, who has great character, who has a huge amount of class and who genuinely cares.



from Ed Jones...

As you walk up to the Check-in Table at the tournament, you wonder if "Pitchers Softball Club" is playing. You stop for a minute to listen and, sure enough, you hear, "OK ladies, let's keep scoring! We are not through yet" and you know that Patty Harsch has the team on a roll! As you watch their game, you hear nothing but constant encouragement from Patty to her teammates, no matter the score or whether it was a great play or a bad error. This is Patty Harsch, always a voice with words of encouragement, on the field, in the office and in personal relationships.

She always has a smile for you no matter what is going on. In addition to being an All-American level softball player, she is a good friend and will not let anyone get down on themselves!