



Wilbur “Bill” & Elmer Barkman

Year of Induction: **2019**
Year of Graduation: **N/A**

One of a kind, or in this case, two of a kind. Mr. Wilbur “Bill” Barkman and his brother, Elmer, were unique individuals who left a lasting impression on those who knew them. Their personalities, approach to life, and distinctive reputation as Johnson City institutions due to the length of their association with Johnson City athletics will forever be fondly remembered.

Mr. Bill Barkman worked for the Johnson City School District for decades. He was the head of the district’s grounds crew, and he earned a reputation as being one of the finest and most knowledgeable groundskeepers in our area. Tales of his commitment to the upkeep of Johnson City’s Greensfield area are legendary. Former Johnson City Athletic Director Paul Munley recalls receiving many phone calls from parents in the community telling of how Mr. Barkman chased their kids off the football or baseball field. Bill lived within close proximity to his beloved fields, and he did not take kindly to anyone who was on Johnson City’s fields without permission. Another story associated with Mr. Barkman’s unique approach to his job was on the topic of getting sufficient water on the fields during dry periods. There were times when Mr. Barkman was told by school officials that he couldn’t water the fields. When this occurred, he complied while at work, but after work hours was another story. Using a contact at the Johnson City fire station, Bill had his fireman friend turn on a nearby hydrant late in the evening, giving him plenty of water for the football field. These efforts may have been unconventional, but they definitely paid off. Without question, both Johnson City fans and opponents alike always recognized the quality of the Wildcats’ football field. Many considered the surface to be as good as most college playing fields at the time, and it was often referred to as the premier field in Section IV. In addition to his duties as head of the grounds crew, Mr. Barkman also coached JV baseball for 15 years under head coach and JC Athletic Hall of Famer Bob McDevitt.

Outside of his time during the school day on Johnson City’s fields, whenever anyone saw Bill, his brother Elmer was likely close by. Bill and Elmer were fixtures at Johnson City home football games for decades. They led the sideline crew responsible for keeping the down markers and distance chains, and they were always rooting on the Wildcats from the sidelines. In addition to supporting the district’s athletic teams, Bill and Elmer spent 50 years dedicating their time to Johnson City Little League. Generations of players were lucky to have played on the field at Northside Park that was cared for by the Barkman brothers. In recognition of their dedication to Johnson City Little League, the field’s dug-

outs were dedicated in their name.

The Johnson City Athletic Hall of Fame is proud to induct sibling contributors who were both characters and gentlemen through and through, who bled maroon and white, and who supported Johnson City athletics at many levels throughout their entire lives, Mr. Bill and Elmer Barkman.