



The following is a copy of the speech presented by Wendy Kudeba prior to the presentation of the 2011 EBA Volunteer Award to Patrick McConnell

On behalf of all the players, parents, coaches and executive members of Bloordale Baseball, I want to offer Patrick our most hearty congratulations.

Patrick epitomizes the ultimately dedicated baseball volunteer.

As a member of the community his entire life - and a former Bloordale player himself - Patrick's passionate dedication shows through in the fact that there is no task too small or no initiative too big to garner his attention. He's done it all from coaching to convening, from umpiring to grass cutting, from recruiting volunteers to chairing executive meetings - and everything in between.

Patrick really just lives baseball all summer long.

Millwood Park truly is his second home and he treats it as a castle - for the enjoyment of everyone within Etobicoke baseball and for visiting teams to enjoy.

As fellow nominee Sheila Sprenger noted, even her children Ben and Jake who are Bloordale players notice how dedicated he is to field maintenance. She said as they drive by Millwood Park, the boys will often say to her, "I bet Mr. McConnell is out on the diamonds right now." And they're often right.

Patrick instills a great sense of pride in those who are recruited to assist with board tasks, coaching or convening and makes everyone at EBA and Bloordale feel like part of the greater baseball family.

He has provided an expertise and instilled a love of the game with every level of player, from tball to bantam house league, to select and AAA.

Through all these efforts, Patrick has helped to create a positive reputation for Bloordale and Etobicoke baseball now and for years to come. His volunteerism is a legacy to Etobicoke Baseball Association and Bloordale Baseball Association. Although not everyone could be here tonight, you should also know that your family is incredibly proud of you.

When he's not at a ballpark, Patrick is a journalist and a communications expert. There is an old saying in newspaper journalism that when someone is truly dedicated to the printed word, they bleed ink. I'm pretty sure that Patrick's love of community baseball has now replaced some of that ink with a significant amount of red clay!

Congratulations, Patrick!