



WOMEN OF STYLE

by Brooke Paulshock

photo Juliet Seger

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AMY VENUTO

Hits a Homerun at Ripken Stadium



"Everything you do in this game you do in life.

And everything you do in life you do in this game." ⚾ Cal Ripken Sr.

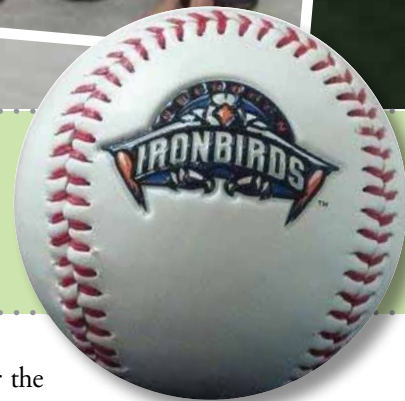
Executive Director of Ripken Stadium, Amy Venuto, has baseball in her blood. She fell in love with the Ripken family and the bond they shared over their love of baseball, and knew she had something to contribute. Amy's father raised her on baseball, and the time they spent together had a huge impact in her life. By the age of twelve, all she wanted to do was work in baseball. "Baseball is so much more than a sport. There is a culture and love behind it," said Amy. "Everything that Cal Jr. & Bill do is in honor of their father, and that's why I feel like I'm such a good fit for Ripken baseball," she explained.

From attending minor league baseball games with her father in Portland, Oregon to continuing her softball career at a collegiate level, Amy Venuto never wavered in her baseball goals. The mother of one daughter and a softball coach at Harford Tech, she launched her career in baseball immediately after graduating from Carlton College in Minnesota. "Working in professional sports you have to move all over the place," Venuto explains, "It is rare to have this type of career and live in such an amazing place like Harford County." Amy has done her fair share of traveling, packing her bags and moving from Minnesota to Washington State to Las Vegas and finally, Maryland.

In 2002, Amy settled in Harford County with her daughter after getting offered the opportunity to work with Cal Ripken Jr. on the up-and-coming Aberdeen IronBirds. Making her mark for the IronBirds in their first year was no difficulty for New York – Penn's Women Executive of the Year. In her first year at Ripken, Amy oversaw ticket sales and the box office, becoming one of the first in minor league history to completely sell out a stadium multiple times.

Meeting Amy in person is an absolute pleasure. She is practically bubbling over with ideas and excitement over new projects in the works. Her personality is outgoing, and her community-based outlook is refreshing. Her impressive resume continues to grow. She recently returned to the stadium after managing the Cal Ripken World Series for several years. Amy is responsible for building the Events department at the stadium, and did such a good job that *Baseball America* named them the "Best Minor League Venue."

Something very near and dear to her heart is the "Women in Baseball Leadership Event," which she helped create six years ago. "Women are very much a minority in baseball," said Amy who is the MC for the event and serves on the steering



"The opportunity to work with Cal & Bill Ripken the opening year for the Ironbirds was incredible." ❖ Amy Venuto

committee. The event includes women from major and minor league baseball. "I don't think of myself as a feminist, but I think it's so important for women to come together and support each other in these leadership roles," Amy explained.

"This is Harford County's team," Venuto explains, "When people come to our ballpark they expect something special because of the Ripken name. They want an experience that will be over the top, and we do our best to deliver." Community and family-fun is the number one priority for Amy and her dedicated team.

A night at Ripken Stadium is a great family-fun outing and when watching the game itself you feel all the excitement that you would feel at Camden Yards, without the hassle of going downtown! The athletes themselves may be young, but they all have the potential to make it to the major leagues. The amenities at the stadium are wonderful as well, featuring 6 luxury boxes, 2-tier crab and picnic pavilion, open-air café, and a party deck to name just a few. There's a Kids Zone that has 2 moon bounces, batting and pitching games and even an arcade to keep the kids occupied until the 9th inning. The food is the best of the ballpark, with hamburgers, nachos, hotdogs, crab pretzels, and of course, ice cold beer.

Amy has been busy preparing for the 2013 season, and implementing some of her new ideas. Summer events include fireworks, notable games (Super Hero Night, Women Appreciation Night, Military Appreciation Night), Dream Car Sprint, Bimmerfest, and Cal Ripken World Series. The World Series is Harford County's only nationally televised event. Sixteen Babe Ruth League teams from all over the world come to compete with all the emotion and intensity of the majors. This event is free to the public, so don't miss this unique experience August 8-19th.

Amy has lots of plans to keep the community coming back. A Season Seat membership program is given to dedicated fans to give them exclusive opportunities that the average fan doesn't get such as networking opportunities as well as special events and behind-the-scenes experiences. She's reaching out to local business attempting to forge strong community ties and opportunities for fans as well as the local businesses.

For more information in what's going on at Ripken Stadium check them out on Facebook or log onto:
ironbirdsbaseball.com