

## JIM HART COACH 1948-1965



Jim Hart is regarded as the “father” of organized youth baseball in the Portage area. As the varsity baseball coach at Portage High in 1948, Coach Hart quickly recognized that without a youth program, it would very difficult to be competitive. He was the key person in starting the Portage Little League and Connie Mack programs for the boys in Portage. Coach Hart turned the losing baseball program into undefeated KVA champions by 1951 and continued to win 2 conference championships in the mid-50’s. In addition to baseball, Coach Hart served as Athletic Director for 2 years, and coached football & basketball at different levels during the 1950’s. As much as Jim Hart was a great coach, he was always remembered by his players and opposing coaches as a class act, who taught great fundamentals and coached with honor and integrity. Coach Hart retired from coaching

baseball in 1965 when the district split into two high schools, so he could watch his son, Mike, play baseball. Jim continued to teach and continued as the math department chairman at Portage Northern.

***Biggest Thrill in sports:*** watching his son Mike play baseball & coaching the Mustangs to 3-1 win over Kalamazoo Central in 1958 in front of 1400 fans.