



Leonia Recreation Commission

370 Broad Ave., Leonia, NJ 07605
Tel. (201) 592-5783 • Fax (201) 592-8654
www.leonianj.gov

IRA J. GOLD
COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON

BARBARA H. DAVIDSON
RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT

Leonia Recreation Department Press Release

To: All News Media for Immediate Release
From: Barbara H. Davidson, Superintendent of Recreation
Subject: Edward R. Miller II Ball Field Dedication

On Monday, August 4, 1958 tragedy struck a young boy who was playing a Midget League Baseball game at Sylvan Park field in Leonia, NJ. As Edward R. Miller II stood up to home plate he was struck in the abdomen by a pitched ball. Death came quickly to this boy of 11 years old. The fatal pitch was delivered and hit the boy in the solar plexus. The impact caused him to swallow the gum he was chewing and to choke violently. Interaction of the gum and the chest blow caused the young man's lungs to fill up with vomit, resulting in suffocation.

First aid was found to be useless and the Leonia Ambulance Corp was immediately summoned. Medical officials later stated there was nothing that could have been done. A heart breaking sidelight to this tragedy was that Eddie's father, Mr. Edward Miller was the Captain of the Volunteer Ambulance Corps team that hurried to the field to aid the fallen youngster. Mr. Edward Miller was summoned to the scene not knowing it was his son who had been hit.

59 years have passed since this fateful day and when the Leonia Recreation Commission was petitioned to rename the Major League Ball Field at Sylvan Park after Eddie Miller, their request was granted. On Saturday, May 20, 2017, at 10:00 am, Sylvan Park will be a blaze of color with hundreds of young boys and girls in their baseball and softball uniforms. The Leonia Police and Fire Department will present Honor Guards, followed by bagpipes and honored guests. Speeches will be given and memories shared about the young man who lost his life playing the game he loved. As long as Leonia continues to tell the story to their children as to why we should never chew gum or have any thing in our mouths while playing any sport, Edward's memory will never be forgotten and his death will not be in vain.

Leonia Recreation Department Contact Information
Superintendent Barbara H. Davidson
bdavidson@leonianj.gov
201-592-5783