

This is from the ceremony to dedicate the field on Harkers Island...

Manley Gaskill – Remembered (December 20, 1952 – December 27, 1997)

Manley Creston Gaskill was born the first son of Creston "Snowball" and Vivian Gaskill of Harkers Island on December 20, 1952. Manley, the boy, grew up like all other young boys on the Island, along the shore and on the ballfield. Both of these would become an important part of Manley, the man, the father and friend to many.

Manley's work was the water and his passion was the ballfield, especially a baseball field. Following in his father's love for sports, Manley was his father's star as his leadership on the field developed. At East Carteret High School, Manley received the Mariner's Award - the school's top athletic award - for lettering in all three major sports. That same year he received a full athletic scholarship to the College of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City.

During the mid-70s, he was a member of the American Legion team in Jacksonville and played second base for the legendary Eastern Blues of Smyrna. This team represented generations of Down East baseball history that now twenty-some years later still stands as the benchmark for all other baseball teams that have followed.

Manley served his community well by coaching any team that needed a leader and a friend. From junior high football, little league, church leagues, girl's softball and basketball, Manley shared his love for the games and all that he had learned from years of practice, drill and work. He and his family spent many hours on the field and on the road, practicing and traveling to games of all kinds across the state.

Manley's desire to work with young people came naturally from his father, "Snowball" who himself had coached Manley's team. He had been the organizer of the Island's first Little League team, the Harkers Island Shark, in 1965. He continued coaching throughout Manley's and Brother's childhood. "Snowball" was honored in 1987 by throwing-out the "First Pitch" to grandson Christopher Chadwick when Harkers Island's ballfields were first opened.

Today, with the dedication of this field in Manley's name, the family tradition continues with Snowball's grandson and Manley's son, Brent, who will make the "First Pitch" today on the field dedicated to his father's honor.

Baseball

Baseball is played everywhere — in parks and playgrounds, back alleys and farmer's fields, by small children and old men ...

It follows the season, beginning each year with the fond expectancy of springtime and ending with the hard facts of autumn.

It is an American odyssey that links

sons and daughters to fathers and grandfathers ...

But most of all, it about time and timelessness, speed and grace, failure and loss, imperishable hope --- and coming home.

This was presented at Manley's Dad, Snowball Funeral

Game called
Across the field of play
The disk has come
The hour is late
The fight is done
And lost or won
The player files out
Through the gate
The tumult dies
The cheer is hushed
The stands are bare
The park is still
But through the night
There shines the light
Of Home beyond the silent hill.

Game called
Where in the golden light
The bugle rolled the reveille
The shadows creep
Where night falls deep
And taps has called the end of play
The game is done
The score is in
The final cheer and jeer have passed
But in the night
Beyond the fight
The player finds his rest at last.

Game called
Upon the field of life
The darkness gathers far and wide
The dream is done
The score is spun
That stands forever in the Guide
Nor victory nor yet in defeat
Is chalked against the player's name
But down the roll
The final scroll
Shows only how he played the game.

Grantland Rice