



Beyond the Diamond

JON TOPOLSKI, BBA '00

SPORT: BASEBALL // PROFESSION: BUSINESS / FINANCE

BY LARRY LITTLE

JON TOPOLSKI, BBA '00, never expected to be more than a defensive replacement or a pinch runner at Baylor. Nonetheless, the Houston Cypress Creek graduate blossomed into one of the better hitters in program history.

Topolski was a three-time All-Big 12 selection for the Bears, adding freshman All-America and third-team All-America honors along the way. He remains Baylor's all-time leader in runs, hits, home runs, triples and total bases nearly two decades after his career.

Today, Topolski is president of Vineyard Financial Group, an independent financial advisory firm based in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, offering securities through First Allied Securities (Member: FINRA/SIPC) and advisory services through First Allied Advisory Services. He has been in that role for two years after more than six years as a financial advisor with the company.

Topolski and his wife Sarah live in Frisco, Texas, with their two daughters; however, he spends significant time in Broken Arrow, where the rest of Vineyard Financial Group's team members office.

"Previously I was working with individuals and setting up plans for them, doing the financial analysis," he says. "As president, I have the responsibility for creating a vision for the culture of our company."

Topolski graduated from Baylor with degrees in finance and financial services planning. He says he uses his Baylor education daily.

"A lot of things that we covered in the financial planning curriculum—whether that's investment analysis or risk management, retirement planning, how to use a financial planning calculator—it's applicable today," he says.

Topolski was born in Michigan City, Indiana, when his father worked in nearby Chicago. His family later moved to the Houston area, and he considers himself a Texan. He was set to return to Indiana for college, planning to attend Notre Dame, when former Baylor Baseball assistant coach Mitch Thompson noticed Topolski while scouting then-high school teammate and eventual Baylor teammate Mark Cogdill.

"I'll be honest, Baylor was not on my radar," says Topolski, whose first time on campus was when he arrived the summer before his fresh-

man year. "I came to Baylor with the knowledge of the education—the value there. I truly came to Baylor somewhat divinely inspired."

As a junior in 1998, Topolski logged one of the best all-around seasons in program history in leading the Bears to their first NCAA Regional in five years. He hit .344 with 19 home runs, 54 RBI, 11 doubles, 74 runs, 22 stolen bases and 49 walks. His 11 triples are a school record, and his 19 homers would have been the school record had teammate Charley Carter not clubbed 21 that same season.

Topolski was a two-time College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Academic All-American at Baylor. He was a fourth-round draft pick of the Houston Astros in 1999 and spent parts of seven minor league seasons in the Astros organization. However, Topolski always had career plans beyond baseball.

"My life goal has always been around being in the financial advisory world," Topolski says. "The opportunity to play professional baseball was more of a sidetrack from this inevitable goal."