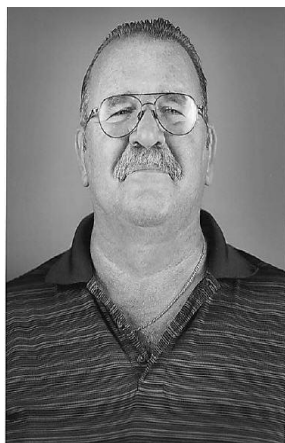


## Windsor-Essex Chatham-Kent Bowling Association

WECKBA would like to congratulate Mike Beedle and Catherine Wilbur for their induction into the Windsor-Essex Chatham-Kent Bowling Association Hall of Fame during our Annual Awards Banquet on Saturday November 04, 2017.



**Mike Beedle**, was inducted in the category Meritorious Service. Mike has been a proud member of the WECKBA for over 40 years. Chris Pillon recalled many fond memories as he passed through Mike's Junior bowling program at LaSalle Lanes. He gave an extensive narrative about that experience. He maintains that Mike has had an influence on his life both on and off the lanes for a very long time. In fact Chris was six years old when he first met Mike and amazingly forty years later he found himself helping to induct him into the Windsor-Essex Chatham-Kent Bowling Association Hall of Fame on November 4, 2017.

Chris also recalled that the following precepts were characteristic of Mike Beedle. What Chris learned was:

Rule # 1: The Coach is Always Right.

Rule # 2: If the Coach is wrong, refer to Rule # 1.

Mike stepped foot into the 6-lane house of LaSalle and has never left. But in those 40 years, many personal achievements and accomplishments have occurred.

Mike Beedle started bowling in the Essex County Junior Bowling program at age sixteen. He has been a Youth program coach for thirty-nine years. He was also a certified coach instructor at various levels including Olympic coaching. He has also directed a Special Olympic bowling league for ten years that is still ongoing. He has been the Director of the Youth program at LaSalle Lanes for thirty-five years. For the last fifteen years he has been the owner of LaSalle Lanes.

Mike is really a "one-man-coaching-team" and has been to great lengths and back. From coaching and bowling in a body brace after enduring a broken back, returning to coaching three days after a heart attack is what Mike Beedle is all about. At one point twenty-five years into his coaching run, he tried to quit, but a petition signed by his loyal Youth bowlers and their parents sent him the message to continue.

In his presentation speech Chris Pillon further added, "Well, I'll tell you how all of this came about: I was lucky to be there for most of it. I walked into LaSalle Lanes as a six year old and was terrified; not of the new sport I'd be learning, and not of the early Saturday mornings that I'd be missing cartoons on TV. I was terrified of the big burly man, with full beard and mustache behind the counter. How I hoped he was just the maintenance guy, but I was wrong. This "one-man-machine" was Coach or Mike (but never "Sir"). From running the youth leagues, fixing the machines, taking money, handing out shoes, teaching kids how to add (that's right, pencil and paper scoring), he also got the opportunity to COACH as well. Although competition was important, it was never #1. The first and most important thing when walking in those doors was to have fun. Mike was always finding new ways of making that happen. Bowling with the Juniors (left-handed of course), taking money out of his own pocket to purchase treats on special occasions, or providing additional awards as an extra special pat on the back, to name a few. One of his shining moments I will always remember will be Mike's unique ways of coaching. Mike noticed many of the younger children had a tendency of paying more attention to their arm swing than to the pins themselves, and just could not keep their eyes on the pins. The result? A 250 pound man standing on freshly dressed lanes, in front of the pins, arms sprawled out, yelling "HIT ME!!" It was a six year old's dream; to aim at something other than pins! Was it unconventional? Absolutely. Did it work? Absolutely. Mike took me under his wing when I was twelve years old to start helping around the lanes, and eventually coaching. I participated in the Junior Olympic Certification in 2002, as Mike had twice previously. It taught me many of the leadership skills I still use to this day. He taught me those skills."

In conclusion Chris adds, "Mike is still moving around, although slower than before, but his heart is still in the right place. He has been a dedicated volunteer of Special Olympics bowling for the last ten years, and seeing the joy on these bowlers' faces when they're on the lanes is priceless. There isn't much more I could say about this man, except for the Thanks that I personally give him for mentoring me, leading me and reminding me how to enjoy myself in the sport of bowling and in life.

Mike Beedle then gave his insight to his years coaching. Mike had the pleasure of meeting so many special people at many bowling centres throughout his life; both kids and adults. He looked at the Hall of Fame display at Rose Bowl many times. "It is such an honour and I am humbled. Bowling is a wonderful sport."

Mike indicated that there are a few people that he needed to thank:

- Friend Bill Stevenson who pushed to get him inducted.
- Friend Chris Pillon for his speech and helping with the kids for such a long period of time.
- Friend Debbie who helped coach with Mike for many years.
- Mike's brother, Wayne, who still coaches with him today and has been coaching with Mike for many years.
- Wayne Dubs and Dan Corchis for helping with a proper resume.
- All the people who voted for him to be inducted.

Mike's parents and family always taught him that it is always better to give than receive.

When Mike started coaching at seventeen then took over the Junior Program at twenty-one he had no idea he would be coaching for so long. Mike indicated, "For a long time, I was, for lack of a better way putting it, a thorn in the side of two special people for which I would like to both apologize and thank. One I can thank, the other I can only hope she knows or somehow hears me. They are Mike Snow and the late Jean Deslippe."

When he first started coaching he did not realize the dedication and commitment it took to coach. For so many years Mike and Jean showed Mike what commitment meant. "They became mentors and at the time my counsels. I can only hope they both consider me as a friend."

The Special Olympics came along about ten years ago. "I would like to thank those coaches and the kids for so much enjoyment. Most of all I would like to thank all the kids that came through the LaSalle bowling program. You have all given me so much pleasure to my life." In recognizing those who attended the ceremony, Mike was humbled and said, "From the bottom of my heart I want to thank everyone for their support and being here tonight."

Mike enjoys bringing enthusiasm, confidence and fun in learning how to bowl and at the same time teaching young bowlers how to have respect for each other. For a very long time he has done that and so much more as a long-time coach and mentor to these kids. Mike Beedle is a fitting addition to the WECKBA Hall of Fame.



**Catherine (Cathy) Wilbur**, was inducted into the Hall of Fame for Meritorious Service. Cathy has been a proud member of the WAWBA / WECKBA for 41 years.

In presenting Cathy, Mary Bondy pointed out that Cathy has been on the executive of leagues for twenty-two years, a bowling coach for ten years, on board of Windsor Area Women's Bowling Association (Director, Association Secretary, Vice-President) and WECKBA (Director, Life Member) on numerous committees of both boards combined for twenty-five years, Windsor Bowling Council Director, WIBC National Delegate, CTF Delegate, and Provincial Delegate. Cathy was part of CTF National Team for Southern Ontario and won winning a gold medal in doubles, was high qualifier in the prestigious Molson Masters in 1999 and can be counted on to participate and to assist with local and provincial tournaments every year. Currently Cathy is Publicity Chair of the WECKBA Board.

As those in the past have said being inducted to the WECKBA Hall of Fame is such an honour. It is the same for Cathy Wilbur who says, "I feel very humbled that I was inducted because I do not look at myself in the same light as the other Hall of Fame inductees. You do not work in the background to support the sport of bowling for the accolades. You do it because you have a love for the sport."

Cathy's volunteer work started well before getting involved in bowling. Cathy comes from a bowling/baseball family. Evelyn Slobasky, her mother Mary Champ's sister, owned Crescent Lanes so Cathy virtually grew up in a bowling centre.

Besides exposure to bowling Cathy mentioned baseball too because her family was heavily involved in running South Windsor Fastball and raised funds every Boxing Day and New Year's Day for South Windsor Fastball. The family ran bingos for more than ten years. Cathy and her brother were both very active fastball players. She also got involved with her first coaching stint with a boys' team who were pre-teens. Included on the team were four boys who did not speak English. Complicating things further was the fact that one of fathers did not want his sons to have a female coach. Cathy says that that was a real challenge!

Crescent Lanes became the central focus for the family and especially for Cathy. Cathy remembers that in her younger years they all worked at Crescent Lanes, in the snack bar, in kitchen, as waitresses, at front desk, or cleaning. Her mother worked there and her father, Gary, used to set pins. Her brother, Larry, worked as a busboy and then at the front desk. Cathy worked in snack bar and later as a waitress. Naturally on many days the family would come to the Crescent and bowl.

Cathy came up through the Youth bowling program. She moved on to bowling in Adult leagues when she was seventeen. She points out that, "I have bowled in numerous leagues: University league, Saturday Night Mixed, Crescent Belles, Crescent Ladies Classic, and Superchicks. I still bowl in the Saturday Night Mixed and Superchicks leagues today."

Her mother was a long-time Secretary of Saturday Night Mixed and she taught Cathy how to be an efficient Secretary/Treasurer long before we ever used computers for record keeping. "Evelyn always put forth her ideas of what should be done. Evelyn and my mother were my early mentors."

After Cathy started bowling in those leagues, she began taking on executive positions in leagues - Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-President, and President. Today Cathy is President of one league and Secretary/Treasurer of another league. She has been on the executive of different leagues for more than twenty-two years.

Once Cathy became proficient in executive positions in Leagues both Evelyn Slobasky and Dorothy Aqwa suggested that "I join the Women's Board because they said I could bring forward new ideas since I think outside of the box."

Cathy joined the Women's Board as a director in 1992. While on the women's board she worked on numerous committees. She did not know it at the time, but Dorothy and Evelyn were teaching Cathy the workings of the Board, so that she could eventually become Association Secretary. Cathy was Association Secretary for a number of years, until she had to step down due to increased full-time work commitments at the University of Windsor. She held positions of Director, Association Secretary, and Vice-President on Women's board. When the boards merged Cathy moved over to the combined board where she is still active today. Cathy has been a member on the boards of the local bowling associations for twenty-five years.

While working as Association Secretary, she acquired another mentor, the late Len MacLelland, who held a similar position with the Men's Board. Cathy felt that it was very appropriate that we honoured Len in a new segment of our awards banquet.

Besides sitting on assigned committees on local board, Cathy's current major role on the board is Publicity and writing local bowling articles for CTF Connection which publishes six times a year right across Canada.

Not only was Cathy an active member on board, on the executive of bowling leagues, but she coached in the Junior Bowling program at Crescent lanes for 10 years with Mike Snow and Jean Deslippe, and she sat on the Windsor Bowling Council with Jean. The Bowling Council was an informal group composed of representatives of Women's Men's and Youth Associations prior to 2005.

Jean Deslippe was a long-time volunteer to whom Cathy looked up to and a close friend. If Cathy had questions or concerns, she would talk to Jean quite a bit about issues. Jean, Mike Ouellette and Donna Lloyd, our Association Manager, helped Cathy through a tough situation last year. Cathy was having a difficult time resolving a problem with a league, and Cathy was going to remove herself from bowling for

a while. But through some private phone conversations with these three individuals, she was able to resolve the situation.

Cathy is firm in her belief that “Parents, Bowlers, League Executive, Board Members need to remember that we do this work in bowling in the background because we love the sport. Some people may not be appreciative of our efforts and there are people out there that are quick to judge and offer opinions, but people need to ask themselves would they step up to the plate and do the job.

“I love doing this work because I love interacting with people and I love the sport of bowling. I think people matter, so as Jean always told me, you try your best to accommodate individuals to the best of your ability – explaining situations goes a long way.”

Cathy feels the need to get out and support local bowling tournaments. She believes if individuals spend time arranging these events then we as bowlers need to try and support them. Last year, in February 2016 Cathy had a total knee replacement. By working hard with a rehabilitation program, six months after surgery she was able to bowl in City of Roses tournament.

Cathy dedicated her induction to three very powerful women mentors in her life: her mother, Mary Champ, her aunt, Evelyn Slobasky, and her long-time friend and mentor Jean Deslippe. “Without their support,” she revealed, “I would not be standing in front of you today. Also, to the rest of the Hall of Famers I feel very humble to be in your company.” Cathy also thanked her husband, David for his continued support and understanding. Cathy hopes to continue being actively involved for many years to come now that she is retired from a thirty-seven year career at the University of Windsor.

Submitted by Mike Ouellette.