

HEIDI WOODS AND BENNIE GEMELLO INDUCTED INTO TUCSON METRO USBC HALL OF FAME

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Tucson Metro USBC President

TUCSON - Tucson Metro USBC held their annual Hall of Fame Ceremony March 1, inducting Heidi Woods and Bennie Gemello for Superior Performance.

The ceremony took place after the conclusion of the final team squad for the 81st Annual Tucson Metro USBC City Open Championships and 75th Annual Women's Championships at Lucky Strike Bowl.

Both Bennie and Heidi thanked their families, friends, coaches and others for their bowling careers and successes.

BENNIE GEMELLO

Bennie began bowling at the age of 11, encouraged by her father Benedicto and her mother, Virginia. Her competitive fires were lit when her brother came home with a bowling trophy.

It was league bowling, with her parents, where Bennie began to develop her bowling skills.

Bennie bowled City, California State and the Women's International Bowling Congress Tournament with her mom.

Bennie took part in the California State Queens tournaments and one of her highlights was finishing as the runner-up to Hall of Fame bowler Tish Johnson.

The Western Women's Professional Tour (WWPT) was next on Bennie's bowling journey.

She became friends with Hall of Famer Donna "Mighty Mite" Adamek, bowling and cashing in many events on this tour. In addition to Adamek, Bennie bowled with Tish Johnson, Mary Ann Dugan and other women Hall of Fame bowlers on the WWPT. Bennie's high game on the WWPT was 290.

Bennie came to Tucson in 1993, and it was Hall of Fame bowler, Linda Wallace, who opened doors for her to bowl in the Old Pueblo. Bennie was part of the team of Linda, her husband Eric Hew and Carol Waterick. Her highest score in league play in Tucson was a 299!

Bennie has won an impressive ten City titles. She said her most memorable was the doubles title with JoAnn Warren and the several team titles she won.

Here is Bennie's record of wins in Tucson tournaments (Tucson Women's Bowling Association and Tucson Metro USBC):

Women's City Doubles – Handicap - 2004.
Senior Women's City All Events Scratch - 2008.
Senior Women's City Double Event Scratch - 2008.
Senior Women's City Single Event Scratch - 2008.
Senior Women's City Single Event - Handicap - 2010.
Women's City Team Event – Handicap - 2012.
Senior Women's City Team Event – Scratch - 2015.
Senior Women's City Doubles Event – Scratch - 2017.
Senior Women's City Team Event – Scratch - 2017.
Senior Women's City Team Event – Scratch - 2018.

Bennie continued to bowl on other circuits, cashing in many events, including the Golden Ladies Classic Tournaments. In addition, Bennie has bowled in Nationals for 24 years!

Her daughter Lisa and James Sullivan are two people who still inspire Bennie to continue her bowling career. In addition to bowling, she coached youth bowlers at Tucson Bowl, citing it as one of her memorable experiences.

Bennie has done Tucson proud, as the Old Pueblo's Mighty Mite of the lanes!

Tucson Metro USBC is proud to induct Bennie Gemello to the Hall of Fame as part of the Class of 2025, for her Superior Performance in bowling.

HEIDI WOODS

Heidi started bowling at the age of 6. She made a deal that she would get her first pair of bowling shoes when she had bowled her first 200 game, which occurred at the age of 8.

In 1994, Heidi won the Washington State Queens tournament, as well as the Ladies Professional Bowlers Tour Regional Event that took place in Everett, Washington.

Heidi wanted to continue her education, as well as bowl, so she made a phone call to Wichita State and as fate would have it, was able to talk directly to Gordon Vadakin, the head coach of Wichita State, and made arrangements for a visit and from 1995 through 1999, Heidi bowled for the prestigious Wichita State Shockers bowling program.

At Wichita State, Heidi was a Four Year Academic All American. In 1997, Heidi was named First Team All American, and in 1999, named Great Plains Conference Player of the Year. After college, Heidi moved to Tucson, bowled in league and tournaments.

Heidi has won an amazing 26 Tucson City Titles, including:

Women's City All Events - Scratch - 2008.
Tucson Metro Queens - 2008.
Women's City Singles Event - Scratch - 2009.
Women's City Team Event - Scratch - 2010.
Women's City Single Event - Scratch - 2010.
Women's City Doubles Event – Scratch - 2012.
Women's City Doubles Event – Scratch and Handicap - 2013.
Women's City All Events – Scratch and Handicap - 2013.

Women's City Team Event – Scratch and Handicap - 2013.
Women's City Team Event – Scratch - 2014.
Women's City Team Event – Scratch and Handicap - 2015.
Women's City Team Event – Scratch - 2016.
Women's City Team Event – Handicap - 2018.
Women's City Singles Event – Scratch - 2019.
Women's Senior Team Event – Scratch - 2022.
Women's Senior Doubles Event – Scratch - 2022.
Women's Senior All Events – Scratch - 2022.
Women's City Team Event - Scratch - 2023.
Women's City Singles Events – Scratch - 2024.
Women's City Team - 2025.
Women's City Team - Scratch - 2025.
Women's City Doubles - Scratch 2025.

In addition to her bowling titles, Heidi has bowled seven 300 games, and one 800 series. In 2008, Heidi was awarded the AMAFAC High Average Merit (Highest Avg for an Adult female) award with a 227 Average.

Heidi's bowling success would not have been possible without the love and support of her Mom and Dad. She says she is very competitive and her biggest love in bowling is to get to bowl with her best friends, which she says is the "greatest thing that bowling has given to me."

The greatest thing for bowling in Tucson is to get to see Heidi Woods take the lanes and bowl!

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