



Jack Fine President's Award

Walter J. Valentan

2016

Joining us here in Niagara Falls is a gentleman who has given his life to our industry and association. His career in bowling, spanning 34 years, was a proving ground for his ability to lead, nurture and innovate. I speak, of course, of a man who has commanded the respect of our industry for a generation....
Mr. Walter J Valentan.

Walter was born June 23rd, 1929 in Graz, Austria. The second child of Joseline and Johan Valentan, brother to sister Lotte and brother Arnold. No, not that Austrian Arnold, though the accent is somewhat identical when he's mad.

Walter graduated from the Technical Institute in Graz back in 1947 with a diploma in Tool & Die Making. While in school, the young and athletic Walter applied himself to gymnastics, track & field and soccer. He later became an enthusiastic rock climber and downhill skier, and pursued both sports with passion until he and a friend emigrated to Canada in 1951.

Settling in Galt, 1953 saw him take up with Sunar Industry Ltd. in Waterloo. Over 19 years with the company he progressed to Plant Engineer and developed the many organizational and



Walter Valentan presented with the President's Award by Bowl Canada President Todd Britton
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people skills he would soon be putting to work in our industry.

During his time at Sunar he began his involvement with our sport. In 1955 Walter was persuaded by a coworker to spare in a league at Waterloo Lanes. He averaged 160... not great, but with the counter pin still in effect, he was impressed with himself nonetheless. Though he never had a lesson, he managed to work his way up to a 220 average. Obviously not on track to outshine the elite in 5-pin, he decided

to contribute to the sport, a growing passion, in another way, and brought his organizational and administrative skills to bear.

By the late 1950's he was actively involved as a member of several league Executives. He branched out and began helping the struggling youth program, advertising and promoting it where possible. He saw all those parents sitting there each week, and through his personal



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charm managed to talk as many as he needed to get involved in coaching the kids and building a strong youth program. As a by-product he also developed dedicated bowling families. Over the years his skill in recruiting and motivating volunteers show clearly how he managed this.



Walter with friend and long-time Bowl Ontario President (and Bowl Canada President) Mariano Meconi at the 2002 National Classified Championships Banquet

In 1964, a group of dedicated bowling enthusiasts gathered to form the Kitchener-Waterloo 5 Pin Bowlers Association. All 15 in attendance were “voluntold” into positions, with Walter’s being Membership Chair. In that capacity, he enlisted the help of those his business instincts told him he would have to get involved... the local proprietors. By 1965-66 he had built up the membership from 0 to 3,000, and by 1969-70 he got the count up to 4,600.

Around this time he also served as one of the first Lane Certification Agents in Ontario, travelling throughout the Conestoga Zone for annual inspections. By 1966 he was elected Vice-President and not long after ascended to the association’s Presidency, earning the President of the Year award in 1969.

During this period he was elected to the Board of the Ontario Bowling Congress, on which he served for 4 years. At the 1971 convention, the late Bert Garside suggested Walter leave Sunar Industries and put his administrative skills to work at the OBC. A year later he had quit Sunar and was appointed Director of Public Relations at OBC. With this new title, Walter was told his first task would be to generate enough revenue to cover the new demands on payroll.



Together Walter and Bert Garside identified two new goals; Increase participation in existing programs, and get the proprietors association more involved with their association. Walter hit the road, calling on the bowling community across Southern Ontario and making things happen. He used his experience building YBC to develop the concept of Decentralized Zones.

With many successes under his belt, he left OBC in 1973 and accepted an offer where his skill set, and just as importantly his intimate knowledge of the sport, were put to work as Executive Director of the Bowling Proprietors Association of Ontario, now named Bowl Ontario.



To support the YBC program he developed the Family Twosome Tournament, which continues on to the day. Again, a promotional tool to get families involved and into the picture. He also put together an incentive program to stimulate sales in the National Fund

Campaign, which proved quite successful.

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On the field at Skydome in Toronto (2004) with Bowl Ontario President Don Gorman and YBC bowlers presenting the Jays Care Foundation with a cheque for \$20,000

On the legislative side, Walter, along with Jack Fine, our other Bowl Canada President's Award recipient, worked to change the liquor laws in Ontario, and brought long-overdue lounges into the bowling centres in the province. And he continued to pour his resources into our sport and industry, supporting each side of bowling, sport and business, with his calm and organized style over a career spanning 34 years.

Having retired a few years ago, Walter continued bowling and lives happily in Oshawa with his charming wife Trudi, and your Board of Directors are very please to have them join us here this evening. For his is not just an Ontario success story. Walter has also been a key figure in shaping policy and program on a national level for the bowling industry through his efforts on the National Board of Directors.

On a personal note, I am delighted he is here with us. Since early on in my days with Bowl Canada, Walter has been a supportive friend and mentor to me, as he has been with many others. Always with a word of advice when asked for, and always available to share his many

experiences. The man is a walking encyclopedia of our sport and industry in Canada. And always happy to share.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me as I welcome to the microphone a dear friend, a true contributor, and a force that has left a positive mark on our industry.... our 2016 recipient of the Bowl Canada President's Award.....

WALTER JOHANN VALENTAN

