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Spare Change

By Johnny Campos

Bowling Association will add three members to its Hall of Fame

The Peoria River City Bowling Association will add three new members to its Hall of Fame on Saturday night.

This year's honorees will be Eric Zueck and Vince Pollard in the Outstanding Bowler category, and Lorraine Williams for Meritorious Service.

The event, which will be held at Barrack's Catering, also will honor the association's All-Star teams and Youth Stars of Tomorrow.

Zueck is already a member of the Greater Pekin USBC Association Hall of Fame (inducted in 2015). But he started his bowling career in the Peoria association.

He had been nominated a few years ago by his dad, Richard Zueck, who passed away in 2015.

"My dad put me in around 2015," Zueck said. "I was only like 43, but then they changed their rules to make it 45, and they didn't tell me I had to put in a new application. So I might have missed a few years."

But he has more than enough honor scores to qualify for the honor. Zueck, a local attorney, has rolled 62 perfect games and 30 series of 800 or better.

That's not bad for a guy who didn't start bowling until he was 24.

"I didn't bowl as a youth," he said. "I worked at Walmart, and we used to go next door to Silver Bullet for drinks every night after work. There were four of us, and I finally realized that we had to find something else to do besides sit there and drink."

"A friend of mine played baseball at Olney Junior College and suggested softball. But there were still only four of us. Another friend had gone to Western Illinois and said, 'Let's bowl.' We still needed five, so another guy had a brother who bowled with us and my dad was our sixth. So we started bowling."

Zueck continued bowling when he went off to attend Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan.

"I bowled when I was in law school at a couple of different places in Lansing," he said. "But I didn't really take it seriously until 2004. I had a 300 when I was 25, but didn't have another one until 2003, eight years later. So, from 2003 to now, I've had 61."

Zueck's best year was the 2009-10 season when he rolled 12 300 games and nine 800 series. That's in addition to seven more games with 11 strikes. He finished with a cumulative average of 233 for 463 games, including high averages of 243 and 241. His high career average for one league was 246 for 32 games at what was then known as Safari Bowl.

"Somebody told me that I should have been in the Hall of Fame a long time ago," he said. "But I didn't start bowling to get into the Hall of Fame."

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"I don't bowl every tournament. A lot of times I couldn't because of different things at work. But I try to bowl when I can."

And usually very well.

Pollard's application had been submitted around 2018, but the left-hander was still surprised when he was told that he had been elected this year.

"The first thing I thought about was my dad (Darnell)," Pollard said. "The accomplishments that I've been able to make, every day I wish that he was here."

Darnell passed away in 2020 at the age of 71, but not before he had made the Pollards a family with three generations of bowlers with perfect games. He rolled his only trey at the age of 69, and his grandson, Vince Pollard Jr., had a couple of 300s, including one at the age of 12.

Vince Sr. wasn't sure he had the credentials to be selected into the Peoria Hall of Fame.

"I didn't think I had enough honor scores," he said. But with 25 treys and nine series of 800 or better, he had more than enough.

Pollard actually says that he is a late bloomer on the lanes. His dad got him started, and his grandmother bought him his first bowling ball.

But until he was in high school, Pollard was much more interested in a different round ball.

"Basketball was my love, and bowling was my girlfriend," he joked. "I didn't really start concentrating on bowling until I probably was 18 or 19. That's because I started growing out instead of up."

Among the guests who will be in attendance to see Pollard, the General Manager at Landmark Lanes, inducted will be his son, Vince Jr., who will be making a trip back home from Denver to introduce his father.

"I haven't written anything down for my speech, so, I'm just going to speak from the heart," Vince Sr. said. "I'm going to speak as a GM as well. There are some things I need to get off my chest. I'll talk about the sport itself, how it's declining and how we can keep it alive."

Pollard said there will be about 40 people in the audience as his guests for the event. But that number could have been even higher.

"The list got that short because Andre Harper's wedding reception is that night also," Pollard said. "I don't want them to have to choose. Support him. It's a big thing for both of us. We'll get together afterwards, and there will be more celebrating."

Williams has been a member of several championship teams but is being honored mainly for her service to the TNBA.

She served on the Peoria TNBA Senate as a vice-president and sergeant at arms, and as a volunteer coach for the TNBA junior leagues.

"I was surprised when they called me to tell me I had been selected," Williams said. "But I have been very involved with the TNBA."

"When a person is inducted into the Hall of Fame, that means they were a good sportsmanship person, polite to their opponents as well as to their teammates. They respected their coaches and everyone around them."

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Bowling was just one of a long list of sports in which Williams was involved.

“I played sports all my life, and I was pretty good in every sport I played – softball, basketball, baseball, track, volleyball, pickleball, corkball, and I even played football.

“Sports have always been part of my life. They have allowed me to hide my sadness. They have allowed me to get through school to deal with depression and anxiety. I’ve used sports all my life to deal with life.”

When Williams retired from softball, she started bowling.

“I met a lot of nice people and a lot of rude people,” she said. “I haven’t bowled in a lot of years, but I’ve lived and learned who people are and what they are not.

“I have a special needs son and don’t have very many friends. I have become a loner. I left bowling with a heavy heart.”

Williams is still involved in her church and local community while caring for her son.

Gary Robinson, a 2023 honoree, also is on the agenda. He was unable to be at last year’s ceremony because he was attending his sons’ final high school marching band competition in Indianapolis. So, he will be given the opportunity to give his acceptance speech on Saturday.



Eric Zueck

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Vince Pollard Sr.



Lorraine Williams