

Bill Bednar Inducted into Archery Hall of Fame

On Friday, September 21, 2007, 82-year-old William J. (Bill) Bednar of Suffield, OH, was inducted into the Archery Hall of Fame during its 24th induction dinner at the museum's permanent home in Springfield, MO. Bednar's son, Rick, introduced his father at the ceremony.



The Archery Hall of Fame was formed in 1971 to honor outstanding members of the archery community and to preserve the history and the tradition of archery and bow hunting. Some of its more notable inductees include Fred Bear, Ann and Earl Hoyt, Ben Pearson, and Doug Easton.

Bednar, now an active 82 years old, became fascinated with archery in the fall of 1958 when he and his wife, Edith, attended the Cleveland Sportsman's Show with another couple. Bednar, 33 at the time, spent most of the afternoon shooting arrows with his friend at the show's archery venue while the two wives were left to roam the show on their own.

For months following the show, Bednar did not stop talking about how much he had enjoyed the experience, so his wife decided to buy him a fiberglass bow and arrow set at an Akron department store that Christmas.

But, something about the bow was not right, so he visited an archery shop in nearby Tallmadge where the proprietor, Ely Berry, quickly realized that even though Bednar was right-handed, he was left-eye dominant. He needed a left-handed bow. So, he retired his wife's wonderful Christmas present and had Berry order him a brand new "wrong-handed" bow.

Bednar wasted no time joining the nearby Ravenna Archery Club, where he met local legend, Harry Gilcrest. Gilcrest ran the club, was the football coach at Ravenna City High School, and was a great archer in his own right. According to Mrs. Bednar, "Harry was a great teacher and recognized that Bill was a natural. Right from the start he got him involved in tournament shooting. To this day, he credits Harry for his rapid climb as a tournament archer."

Bednar was more than just a natural archer, though. He was also single-minded, determined and obsessively focused about everything he put his mind to.

In August of 1961, one-year and seven-months after shooting his first bow at the Cleveland Sportsman's Show, he competed as the number three shooter on the USA team that won the World Championship in Oslo, Norway. Individually, he finished 10th in the world.



Believing that archery should move in the same direction as professional golf, Bednar turned professional the following year in 1962 and went on to win the first ever Professional Archery Association (PAA) championships held in Daytona Beach, FL.

The following January, in 1963, the Bednars purchased a brick building in nearby Suffield and spent the next eleven months converting it into a three bedroom dwelling, archery pro shop, and indoor and outdoor archery range.

By November of that year, they had sold the Randolph, OH, home Bednar had built with his own hands from cherry and oak trees felled on the property, and the family moved into their new home and family business, Portage Archery Center.

Once the business was up and running in early 1964, Bednar was anxious to get back in action competing at the highest level. That year he won the prestigious Ben Pearson Open in Detroit's Cobo Hall, five short years after picking up his first bow and arrow.

Edith Bednar ran the business and raised their three children (Cindy 9, Rick 6, and Joanna 3) while Bill continued to support the family as a heavy-equipment operator, working out of the Operating Engineers' Union, Local 18 hall. Bednar continued working road construction for the next three years until he was injured while working on a campus expansion job at Kent State University. The injury was not job threatening, but by then the business had grown enough to support the family, so he quit construction to help his wife run the business.

In 1965, he repeated as the PAA champ and nearly repeated as the Ben Pearson Open champ when he tied the winning score but was awarded second place by the judges.

The following year he won his third PAA championship and established himself as the dominant field and target shooter of the decade, winning most of the open invitational money shoots. Between 1963 and 1983 he also won 27 Ohio State field and target championships.

During the 70's Bednar still competed at a high level but focused his energy on coaching his son and two daughters, all of whom had highly successful competitive archery careers at the national level.

From 1976 through 1979, Bednar coached the University of Akron archery team where son, Rick, became a three-time NCAA individual champ and where the team won the 1979 NCAA Team Championship.

Under Bednar's tutelage, Rick, traveled the world representing the USA on international teams. He qualified as the first alternate on the 1976 Olympic team, shot on the 1979 team that won Pan Am games, and also shot in the qualifier for the 1980 Olympic team, which never got to compete because of the USA boycott under the Carter Administration.

Between 1987 and 1997, Bill Bednar was a six-time gold medalist in the Senior Olympics. And, in 1990 and '92, he participated in the World Crossbow Championships in Portugal and New Zealand respectively.

Today, Portage Archery Center, still a family affair, operates as *The Complete Hunter's Outlet Archery Center*, a division of TenPoint Crossbow Technologies, a successful manufacturer of precision engineered crossbows, which Bednar, son Rick, and longtime friend and business associate, George R. Gardner, founded in 1994.

Rick, now fifty, runs TenPoint. Daughter, Joanna, is the Comptroller, and daughter, Cindy, is the Director of Office Administration.



The youth instructional programs and leagues that Bill and Edith Bednar began in the early years at Portage Archery, continue today at *Hunters Outlet*. On any given Saturday as many as 100 young archers, shooting in three shifts, show up for archery instruction.

Today Bill Bednar and Edith, his devoted wife of 57 years, are retired in name only. On any given day, Edith will stop by the TenPoint factory, located next door to the original archery pro shop, to visit, talk a little business, or maybe to have lunch with one of her children.

Still fascinated and obsessed with the ballistics and trajectory of arrow flight, Bill, a self taught carpenter, machinist and inventor, comes to the crossbow factory nearly every day and hangs out in his small machine shop tucked in the back corner of the assembly building. That is where he has invented much of the technology that has made TenPoint the industry leader in crossbow technology.

Like wife, Edith, says, “He holds a whole bunch of crossbow patents. And, he can fix anything or build anything. I’ve never seen anyone so determined. If he puts his mind to something, don’t bother talking to him or getting in his way. You just can’t stop him until he gets where he is going.”

