

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## SPIGNER, COOK, CLARK and WYCKOFF LEAD 2023-24 IBMA AWARD WINNERS

ARLINGTON, Texas – Bill Spigner, Jack Cook, Tom Clark, and Jackie Wyckoff have been chosen as winners of the four major 2024 International Bowling Media Awards. They join E.J. Tackett and Jordan Richard, who were selected as 2023 Male and Female Bowlers of the Year, and John Janawicz and Dana Ausec, the 2023 Male and Female Senior Bowlers of the Year. All will be recognized April 24 at the United States Bowling Congress Convention in Las Vegas.

### LUBY HALL OF FAME – BILL SPIGNER

*The Luby Hall of Fame Award is given to an individual (living or deceased) who has made a distinguished contribution to bowling in print, broadcast, telecast or photographic coverage over a period of at least 10 years.*

**Spigner** of Vernon Hills, Illinois, surpassed long-time Syracuse (New York) Post Standard writer Fran Piraino for the honor.

He compiled a record on the lanes that landed him in seven bowling halls of fame, including that of the USBC. He also has contributed to the sport as a top-level coach and, perhaps, somewhat under the radar, as a prolific writer.



Spigner authored an instructional column for every issue of Bowling Digest magazine, which was published from 1983 to 2004. In 2008, he became a senior writer for Bowlers Journal International, penning “The Pro Approach” column as well as occasional feature stories.

“I never dreamed anything like this. I never dreamed of halls of fame anyways and I kept getting into them,” he said. “I never considered myself a true journalist. I never had any education in writing anything or getting involved in writing until Bowling Digest. I wasn’t a true writer, but I learned an awful lot not only about bowling but how to structure an article. To be up there with the other guys in there is shocking.”

His writing also appeared in the Chicago Bowler for six years and in TenPin Alley for three years. All told, he has written more than 400 published instructional columns, helping bowlers of all skill levels improve their games and enjoy the sport more.

## ALBERTA E. CROWE MERITORIOUS SERVICE – TOM CLARK

***The IBMA Alberta E. Crowe Meritorious Service Award is presented to an individual or organization for outstanding long-term accomplishments in and for the sport of bowling.***

**Clark** of Muskego, Wisconsin, beat out daily web bowling articles in the 11th frame by Jeff Richgels of Madison, WI.

The long-time commissioner of the Professional Bowlers Association, Clark has been a supporter and cheerleader for the sport of bowling for more than two decades. He has not been afraid to take risks which has resulted in a better, stronger, and more solvent PBA and has provided for world-wide media coverage, which has been lacking for so long.

“It’s always nice to be recognized. I really appreciate the honor,” Clark said. “Any award with Alberta Crowe’s name on it is special. I’ve dedicated my life to getting more people interested in watching and reading about bowling in hopes they will get out and bowl themselves.”



Clark was born in Syracuse, New York, and attended Buffalo State University where he received his bachelor’s degree in journalism. He spent more than a decade in print journalism, including a stint as Sports Assignment Editor for USA Today. While filling that role, Clark said he pushed for better media coverage of bowling, feeling that the media “never treated bowling fairly.” This led to his first job in the bowling business in 2005 as Chief Communications Officer for United States Bowling Congress. In 2008, he was hired as Deputy Commissioner of the PBA, and has served as Commissioner of the PBA since 2011.

As PBA Commissioner, with a staff of 19 people and a four-person advisory board, Clark oversees the PBA membership which numbers 3,000+ worldwide. Clark also guides other agendas such as PBA sanctioned competitions, communications, sponsorships, and media coverage.

Faced with financial issues, the PBA and ESPN jointly worked on ways to cut costs. One idea was to hold multiple tournaments in one location which could have the final rounds recorded and aired later, thus saving on travel costs for players and crew. The result was the very first PBA World Series of Bowling, which Clark created in 2009.

In 2018, Clark managed the transition of the PBA’s television media rights from ESPN to Fox Broadcasting. PBA Tournament broadcasts began airing on FS1 and Fox network terrestrial stations in the 2019 season. In August 2023, the PBA and Fox agreed on a two-year extension of their broadcast partnership.

## MIKE HENNESSY AWARD OF MERIT – JACKIE WYCKOFF

*The IBMA Hennessy Award of Merit is presented to an individual for outstanding long-term service to IBMA, including BWAA (Bowling Writers Association of America) and NWBW (National Women Bowling Writers).*

**Wyckoff** of Campbell, California, topped former Las Vegas based TenPin Alley Bowling newspaper owner Frenchy Letourneau.

She began her service to bowling writers' organizations in May 1998 when she was elected to serve as Secretary/Treasurer during the charter meeting for the California Bowling Writers, a position she held for nearly 20 years. In 1999 she joined the National Women Bowling Writers (NWBW), and in 2003 she joined the Bowling Writers of America Association (BWAA). The groups merged in 2006 to later become the International Bowling Media Association (IBMA).



Wyckoff served as IBMA president from 2009-2011, Vice President from 2007-2008, and Operations Manager from 2015-2020. She was also Vice President of NWBW from 2004-2006 and was elected to the IBMA board of directors at the merger meeting.

She inked a deal in 2018 with Storm Bowling to sponsor the Collegiate Bowlers of the Year Awards and was the primary person in creating the IBMA Writing Competition in 2009. After several years of disappointing entries to the Pezzano Scholarship, in 2017 Wyckoff and Keith Hamilton revamped the entire process, taking the applications online, instituting a media blitz, and securing the BBIA to a four-year sponsorship commitment, resulting in a tenfold increase in entries the first year and nearly 50 times increase in the following years.

“I am honored to even be nominated for this award let alone winning,” she said. “Mike Hennessy was a great mentor for me and to win this award in his name means a lot. Also, going against French LeTourneau who has done so much for the organization, it’s a big surprise, I’m really happy, and I want to thank everybody.”

In 2004 she was a member of the BWAA/NWBW Merger Task Force, along with Nancy Chapman, Bill Vint and Steve James and created the charter bylaws for IBMA in 2006. Over the years she has served on and chaired many committees, including Nominating; Legislative; Finance and Audit; USBC Convention; International Bowl Expo Trade Shows; Website; Strategic Planning; Membership Retention and Development; Writing Competition; Bowlers of the Year; Senior Bowlers of the Year; College Ranking Polls; Collegiate Bowlers of the Year; and the Chuck Pezzano Scholarship.

Wyckoff has worked as a staff writer for 900 Magazine and Bowling Industry Magazine. Her freelance writing credits include published articles in US Bowler Magazine; Northern California Bowling World; Southern California Bowling News; the San Jose Mercury News; and assorted papers in the Bay Area News Group.

Honors include IBMA Life Member; CBW Life Member, USBC Life Member; Winner of the NWBW Newsletter Division I award for the California Bowling Writers InfoLink and the NWBW First Venture award for the Peninsula WBA Newsletter.

She has used her astute management skills to begin administrative groups and mentored newer members of those organizations to become effective committee members and chairs.

## RIP VAN WINKLE AWARD – JACK COOK

*The Rip Van Winkle Award honors those who have made major contributions to the sport of bowling and have been overlooked or under-appreciated for more than 20 years.*

**Cook** of Beaumont, Texas, earned the award over Chuck Lande, the pioneer of two-handed bowling style.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Cook managed the largest bowling center in the United States – The Showboat in Las Vegas – which at the time was the premier destination bowling center in the country.

He grew its business exponentially with his innovative programs which were new to the industry. He also brought in countless tournament groups with hotel/gift shop/pro shop packages. Additionally, he helped drive the Professional Bowlers Association to host up to five national tournaments there each year. These PBA events included one of the largest pro-am events ever in bowling, one which included Showboat-branded pro-am bowling balls from different manufacturers.



With Cook's work, the Showboat became the host of the richest megabuck tournament in the country – the High Roller – which paid \$200,000 for first place. He also helped put together the Super Bowl High Roller which combined the ability to win a \$100,000 first prize (just half of what was offered in the summer) and enjoy the Super Bowl experience at the same time. Big screen TVs and a gluttonous amount of food and beverage were a must.

With 106 available lanes 24 hours a day, the Showboat was like no other. Major concepts and programs were a welcome testing ground due to its size, league base, and Cook's eagerness to promote and expand the sport. Add in the countless local tournament organizations from around the country that would have their national events at the Showboat once each year; Cook was behind it all.

After 13 years at The Showboat, he moved to Reno to become vice president of stadium operations at the National Bowling Stadium. His tenure there was cut short due to health issues, but his impact on the facility endured. If you were a competitive bowler at any time from 1985-2000, it would be unlikely that you weren't directly impacted by Cook's tenuous work and promotion within the sport of bowling.

"It's really something. I can't believe it," Cook said when learning he received the honor. "It's amazing. I'm real pleased with that. It will hold a special place in my heart."

## 2023 BOWLERS OF THE YEAR: E.J. TACKETT and JORDAN RICHARD

Bluffton, Indiana's, **E.J. Tackett** captured five Professional Bowlers Association titles in 2023 including the U.S. Open and PBA World Championship. He also led the PBA in points with 41,200 and earnings (\$458,450) and was the leader in average at 227.12. He beat out Anthony Simonsen and Jason Belmonte in the voting.

"It's really cool. It's one of those things where it's not just what you do on the PBA Tour," Tackett said of the IBMA honor. "It's one of those awards that holds a lot of weight because everyone is included and not just the guys out here."



**Jordan Richard** of Tipton, Michigan, won three titles, led the Professional Women's Bowling Association in points with 110,162.50 and average at 219.69 for the season. She topped Lindsay Boomershine and Diana Zavjalova in the voting.



## 2023 SENIOR BOWLERS OF THE YEAR: JOHN JANAWICZ and DANA AUSEC

**Janawicz** of Lake Wales, Florida, won two titles in 10 events on the PBA50 Tour including the Senior Masters and PBA50 Tournament of Champions on his way to \$54,300 in earnings while averaging 226.59 for the season. Others on the ballot were Chris Barnes, Tom Hess, and Troy Lint.

"Overall, it was a pretty good year. I can't complain," Janawicz said. "I always looked at it if you win two majors in a year no matter what tour you're in, it's a pretty good year. I was happy with how I bowled. Thanks to all the voters who deemed me as a worthy candidate. I'm very honored."



**Ausec** of Colorado Springs, Colorado, captured the USBC Senior Queens as well as three gold medals in the International Bowling Federation Senior World Championships. Others on the ballot were Sharon Powers, Jill Friis, and Jodi Woessner.

"You want to talk about a dream season, that was it," Ausec said. "To be able to have the success I had is not something I would ever dream of having. Looking back, how do you top that? It was a lot of hard work and some good fortune at the same time, and I'm honored to say that was my year."



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***About the International Bowling Media Association***

Located at the International Bowling Campus in Arlington, Texas, the IBMA provides awards and recognition to professional and amateur bowlers, industry volunteers and bowling writers, as well as promotes bowling journalism as a career choice to youth bowlers throughout America. For more information log on to [www.bowlingmedia.org](http://www.bowlingmedia.org).

**Make a donation to support the IBMA Chuck Pezzano Scholarship  
Presented by the Billiards and Bowling Institute of America**

**International Bowling Media Association**

*The International Bowling Media Association (IBMA) is the world's most prominent bowling media and communications organization. Since 1934, when it began as the Bowling Writers Association of America, it has been a primary industry source for bowling news and information for the global sport and business of bowling.*

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