

2011

Virginia Gravender



Virginia Neel Briggs Gravender started her bowling career officially August 28, 1967, at the Eagles in the first season of the new Central Ladies League on Tuesday Night. Helen Kidder was the secretary. Her average after the first night was a 98. Her sanction card was signed by Norma Shupert. Ginny has all of her sanction/membership cards. For all of you that can do the math and for those who are not as fast, that is 43 years of bowling.

Ginny comes from an athletic family background – her father’s family participated in many sports – he had many accomplishments during his bowling years in Chicago and then again after moving to Elkhart. Ginny married into Richard Gravender’s family of bowling tradition and produced four more bowlers, Jane, Rick, Pam and Dave - eight grandchildren (2 of them as adults are bowling right now), and 5 great grandchildren. Most of them have tried to bowl, so the tradition continues and grows. All of this is why Ginny started bowling. It was her turn to have a night out of the house.

Ginny has participated in most if not all of the city tournaments since she started bowling. In 1969 – she was 5th in Singles – 1977 her now all “Hall of Fame” team consisting of Jackie Ellis, Eunice Ruess, Betty Ingle-Smith, Jane Ruess-Slabaugh and herself won 1st place Handicap Team sponsored by Elcona Foods. In 1979 Ginny bowled with her daughter-in-law Deb Gravender to win the Doubles Handicap Championship while Deb was pregnant with Ginny’s grand-daughter Jennifer. In 2003, Ginny had a wonderful tournament. She won the All-Events Seniors Handicap at a very senior 73 years old. She placed 8th in Team, 18th in Doubles with Deb Gravender, 5th in Senior Singles, 25th in Singles, and 7th in All Events.

Ginny has participated in 12 National Tournaments, 19 State Tournaments, she has received a triplicate award, an all spare patch and several magnets for pins over average. She has been to Mr. & Mrs. Eagles Tournaments and was the General Chairman for the Eagles State Women’s Tournament in Elkhart.