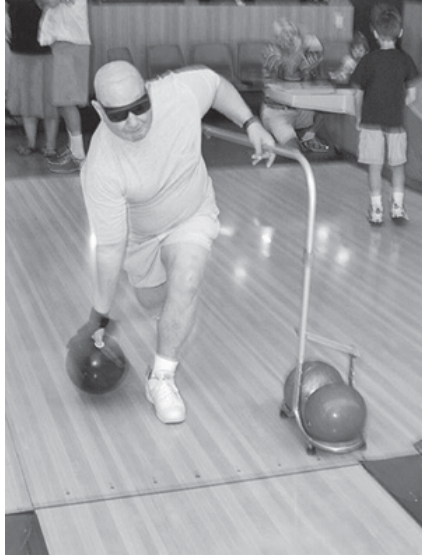


Minnesotan was a kingpin in adaptive bowling circles

by [Access Press Staff](#) // September 13th, 2013



Adaptive sports of all types help people with disabilities get exercise and have fun. Adaptive bowling, which began in the 1940s, is one of the most popular forms of recreation thanks to various devices that make bowling enjoyable. A Minnesotan who was a national champion of adaptive bowling died recently.

Garland “Gar” Giddings of Ramsey was 68 years old. He had initially taken up adapted bowling in 1969.

For a few years, Giddings held the third-highest bowling average in the nation. His highest series ever was 513. He bowled for Team USA in the 2007 International Blind Sports Association’s Blind Bowling Tournament in Australia. He won a bronze medal in a singles event for the blind and finished fourth worldwide in the all-around category.

Giddings lost his sight in a car accident at age 19. His wife Nancy Giddings told the Star Tribune that he “always refused to let his blindness define him.” Giddings enjoyed a long career as a computer programmer with Wells Fargo.

In the community of adaptive bowling, he was known as one of the top blind bowlers. He belonged to the American Blind Bowling Association (ABBA). His average score was 126; his best score was 226.

Giddings was highly competitive, using his strong memorization and mathematics skills gained through his work to become a champion bowler. He used the latest technology and Braille on the job. Nancy Giddings said his work “was logical, and he was a highly logical person.” He used geometry as a bowler and memorized bowling scores. He also was a member of the Twin Cities Audio Darts League.

Giddings was born in Anoka and lived on a farm in what is now Coon Rapids, before his family moved to the Chisago City area. He’d planned to be a farmer until losing his sight in a car accident when he was a freshman at the University of Minnesota’s agricultural campus in St. Paul.

After graduation from the University of Minnesota he learned computer programming in 1969 in Cincinnati. There he joined a blind bowling league. He moved back to the Twin Cities in 1970.

The bowling bug bit Giddings again years later. Eleven years ago, he borrowed bowling rails from the ABBA so he could bowl with his wife, children and others at a church outing. He joined

the ABBA at that time and became an avid bowler, finding new friends and a new way to compete.

“He loved the sound of the pins falling,” his wife said. “He was constantly thinking of how to do it, how to better his score.”

Giddings is survived by his wife, four daughters, three sisters, two brothers, five grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. Services have been held.

The History Note is a monthly column sponsored by the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, www.mncdd.org and www.partnersinpolicymaking.com