

Australian Archery Hall of Fame 2014 Inductee

Gretel Dabovich, OAM: Administrator, Archer and Judge

In 1955, a young girl offered to help a young man she had recently met to look for a lost arrow from his previous day's shooting. This was to be the beginnings of two relationships, one together and the other with the sport of archery.

Gretel's association with the sport reached its 58th year in 2013 and she and John celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary in November, 2013.

The early days of archery in the 50s were really the grass roots of the sport as we know it today and it has been part of the experience to have able to see the wonderful advances in equipment over the past 57 years. Initial equipment was limited in choice and quality, steel bows from England and Sweden and "silver streak" arrows from England; Easton was not yet in the game.

In the 50s in SA, the only club was Adelaide Archery Club and this is where Gretel and John competed. Eden Field Archers was formed as part of the Adelaide club for once a month shoots for those interested in the then, new form of archery.

Gretel and John together with a few others were instrumental in establishing Eden as an individual club in its own right and from 1964 to 1989 Gretel held the positions of Recorder, Vice-President and secretary was granted Life Membership in 1977.

During the 1970s and 80s, Gretel spent a considerable amount of time coaching at schools and her club. The archery population was predominately male and Gretel tried to introduce more females to the sport by coaching at club level and encouraging women's groups.

Over the years, as well as club responsibilities, Gretel has also been active within ARCHERY South Australia as an Olympic Council Delegate from 1970 through to 1980; represented four different archery clubs as Delegate; acted as Team Manager for various SA teams; was Vice-President of ARCHERY SA on two occasions (current) and President for a period of ten years. Her untiring efforts were recognised by the conferring of Life Membership of ARCHERY SA in 2004.

Gretel's shooting career included many State and National titles and records and she was an active campaigner for the acceptance of the compound bow in Australia, which she began shooting in 1980. In April, 1981 Gretel was the first person to score 500 in any field round in Australia with a compound bow.

A brief summary of her shooting highlights include: Archery Australia compound target champion in 1981 and 1982; AA compound field champion 1981, 1982 and 1983; runner-up Las Vegas indoor tournament in 1982 and followed up the following year with a win in the Amateur Open Freestyle Division; member of both the Archery Australia and ABA teams competing in New Zealand, USA and Great Britain.

Gretel suffered two accidents during National tournaments which ultimately affected her active shooting career and, rather than abandon archery, this led her to become more involved in administration and non-shooting roles in Archery Australia and ARCHERY SA.

She was a National Judge with AA from 1986 through to 2008; a member of the organising committee for the FITA World Target Championships held in Adelaide in 1987; member of the organising committees AA National Championships held in Adelaide 1987 to 1999; member AA Officials Committee 2003 to 2008; member/Chair AA Awards Committee from 2005 to the present and in recognition and appreciation of her many years of involvement in the sport, Gretel was granted Life Membership of Archery Australia in 2010 to compliment her Life Membership at Club and State level.

The culmination of her long and illustrious career was the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia which she received from the Governor of South Australia on 8th August, 2011.

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Arrowing experience

Bellevue Heights woman Gretel Dabovich will be inducted into the Australian Archery Hall of Fame this weekend. SEE PAGE 11



Article courtesy of **Mitcham & Hills Messenger** newspaper

BELLEVUE HEIGHTS

Aim fame



Gretel Dabovich, 77, of Bellevue Heights, is being inducted into the Australian Archery Hall of Fame. Picture: DAVID CRONIN

HONOUR FOR ARCHERY GREAT

Sarah Spencer

FINDING a lost arrow almost 60 years ago sparked Gretel Dabovich's love for archery.

Mrs Dabovich OAM, 77, was searching for her husband's arrow and decided she would have a go at shooting it.

"The only thing I knew before that was a bow and arrow were used in the war," the Bellevue Heights resident says.

"When I took that first shot I enjoyed it straight away."

Mrs Dabovich has an impressive history and record of achievements in the sport and will be inducted into the National Archery Hall of Fame on Saturday (April 5).

"When I found out, it was such a great thrill because archery has been a very important part of my life," she says.

Mrs Dabovich broke her wrist before the 1992 World Field Archery Championships in England.



"My wrist hadn't set properly after surgery so I couldn't shoot properly which was such a disappointment because I would have won that world competition," she says.

The injury opened the door for her to become involved in the administration side of the sport while she recovered from surgery.

She has been a member of the Eden Field Archers since 1956 and received an Order of Australia Medal in 2011 for her contribution to the sport.

This has included roles as Archery SA president and vice president and chairwoman of Archery Australia Awards Committee.

In 1981 she was the first person in the country to score 500 in any field round.