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Patron:

His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR
Governor of South Australia

Monday, 13 June, 2011

Gretel Anne Dabovich, OAM

Today's Queen's Birthday Honours' List includes Gretel Dabovich of Eden Field Archers and immediate past President (and current Vice-President) of ARCHERY SA.



Gretel Anne Dabovich (nee Besemeres) began in archery in 1955 aged 18, at Adelaide Archery Club and then Eden Field Archers in 1956. Gretel has been actively shooting or in an administrative role ever since.

Her first official duty was as "Lady Captain" at the Archery Australia National Championships in 1958.

In the 1970s and 1980s she was a prominent shooter in South Australia and nationally, representing Australia at the New Zealand National Archery Championships in 1974.

Other significant achievements include:

- *First woman in Australia to gain a FITA Star – 1973*
- *National compound bow Champion (target) in 1981 and 1982*
- *National compound bow Champion (field) in 1981, 1982 and 1983*
- *Represented Australia at the IFAA Championships in 1988 and 1994*
- *Las Vegas World Indoor Tournament, 1982 (2nd), 1983 (1st) (Open Women's Compound)*
- *New Zealand National Indoor Championships, 1988 (1st)*
- *Holder of numerous Records (recurve and compound) for several years*

From 1979, Gretel was actively involved in the campaign to gain greater acceptance of the compound bow in Australia. It took significant lobbying to get the national association to accept the compound bow for National competition, but this was finally realised in 1990. Australia's acceptance assisted in convincing the International Archery Federation to recognise the bow type in 1992.

Gretel was the first person in Australia to score 500 in any field archery competition (in the National Hunters Round on 18 April, 1981), when compound bows were still very much the "lesser cousins" of archery. The 500 score was regarded as a significant milestone for any bow type, to take archery in Australia to new levels.

ARCHERY SA is affiliated with:



(FITA)

World Crossbow Shooting
Association
(WCSA)



SA Olympic Council

Australian Commonwealth
Games Association (SA Division)

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During the 1986 Archery Australia National Championships in Adelaide, Gretel was in a strong position in the target event but, unfortunately she was injured by a large umbrella which was pulled loose by the wind; this undoubtedly contributed to her inability to compete as well as was expected, at the target event or the field event on the following days.

Finally, while at an Australian Bowhunters' Association national tournament in 1994, prior to a World International Field Archery Association championship in England, she suffered a broken wrist which prevented her from competing strongly at that event although she was still selected in the Australian team.

Following this event, further surgery was required for her wrist but she subsequently had to retire from competition. Not wanting to give up the sport she loves, she became more heavily involved in the administration of the sport both in South Australia and nationally.

Her administration history includes:

- During the 1960s, together with her husband John, Gretel was involved with professor John Daley and the late Wendy Ey in the training of first year physical education teachers in archery at the (then) Adelaide Teacher's College, visiting their annual camp and providing the equipment required for their instruction*
- ARCHERY SA Delegate to SA Olympic Council for 11 years 1970 – 1980*
- Delegate to ARCHERY SA for country Clubs: Blue Lake Archers 1978 – 1985; Port Augusta Archers 1986 – 1997; Whyalla Bowmen 2010-present*
- Awarded Life Membership to Eden Field Archers in 1977*
- Team Manager Senior State Teams, National Championships 1979, 1980*
- Team Manager Junior State Teams 1979, 1980, 1981*
- From 1979 - 1990 actively involved in the campaign to gain greater acceptance of the compound bow*
- National Judge 1986 – 2008*
- Member Organising Committee for the World Target Archery Championships in Adelaide 1987*
- Vice-President ARCHERY SA 1998 – 1999, 2011*
- President ARCHERY SA 2000 – 2009*
- Member Archery Australia Officials Committee 2003 - 2008*
- Awarded Life Membership to ARCHERY SA 2004*
- Member of the Organising Committees for several National Championships in Adelaide, including the inaugural Junior National Championships in 1978 and Masters Games in Adelaide in 1989 and 1999*
- Chairperson Archery Australia Awards Committee 2005 – 2011*
- Awarded Life Membership to Archery Australia in 2009*
- Appointed to the Awards Panel of Sport SA in 2010, South Australia's organisation representing sport to the SA Government.*



Summary:

Gretel has represented ARCHERY SA at various levels of government and sports administration to promote ARCHERY SA as a pre-eminent regional archery association. She continues to raise the profile of archery in the general sports community. Archery in South Australia is the better for it; active membership of the sport has never been better.

Gretel has been a tireless and dedicated President of ARCHERY SA, and a driving force in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.

A scan of minutes of meetings and other records of The Archery Society of SA (now ARCHERY SA) in nearly any period of the organisation's existence indicates Gretel was (and still is) actively involved in contributing to the affairs of the organisation, even when she holds no official position.

She has been actively involved for the past 5 -10 years in endeavouring to achieve a permanent home for ARCHERY SA and it appears that these efforts are at last yielding some significant fruit.

She has contributed outstanding service to the sport for many years.

In 2004 Gretel also began a journey with non-Hodgkinson's Lymphoma which has seen her experience two periods of surgery, plus radiotherapy and chemotherapy (which concluded in August 2008). Thankfully, she has been in remission ever since.

Even during this time she continued with her archery administrative commitments, ably supported by other office bearers, members and friends.

With her husband John, Gretel helped establish a thriving wholesale and retail archery business in 1963 which is still operated by them today. Their son and daughter were also involved in the sport for many years. Son Chris also is involved in the family archery business.

And now Gretel is Australia's first female recipient of an Australian Honour for "Service to the Sport of Archery"....

Congratulations Gretel!