# Western Women Professional Bowlers

1992

# The WWPB Introduction

It wasn't going to be easy, by any means, the five ladies agreed. But the venture presented a challenge which had to be met if the higher average women bowlers of the western United States were ever to compete in competitions worthy of their talents.

The year was1965, the same year some of our members were born. It was also the year when our organization was born at a meeting of five great champions: Merle Matthews; Donna Zimmerman; Rena Barsanti; Janet Harman and Alice Wildau.

Originally entitled Western Women Bowlers, the charter group's by-laws specified that applicants for membership be at least 18 years old, be members in good standing of the WIBC and carry book (or current league) averages of 170 or better for 60 games or more.

With Merle as our first president and Donna as secretary, the first WWB tournament was staged at Fresno's Mid State Bowl in January of 1966. Pasadena's Joni McKenzie had the honor of winning that inaugural event. The WWB gained overnight credibility when the impressive scores the girls were posting appeared in the major bowling publications. Unquestionably, these distaff bowlers deserved the appellation of "The Best in The West", and soon the membership grew to more than 200. By this time, the major bowling establishments were anxious to book WWB tournaments, with house bowlers enthusiastically signing up for our pro-am squads. By1967, as the number of WWB tournaments increased, it became apparent that a full time tournament administrator was going to be essential. But it wasn't until March of 1969 that the ideal T.A. was found. That's when we were bowling a tournament hosted by Del Rio Lanes' dapper Walt Stuetz. His smooth, efficient leadership was so impressive that Bobbie Lipman, as spokesman for the WWB, made Walt an offer that,luckily, he didn't refuse. And what a fortuitous choice Walt has proven to be! Assuming the awesome responsibility of working with and for more than 200 women, the astute and unflappable Mr. Stuetz has won the respect and admiration of us all. His popularity is attributable to his consistency in handling his position with firmness and absolute impartiality.

In 1975, with co-sponsorships and prize funds increasing, it was deemed time to change our name to Western Women Professional Bowlers. It was at that time we commissioned our Las Vegas member, Pat Roush, to design the logo we proudly wear to this day.

In 1981,WWPB took another giant step with a live telecast of our tournament from Eagle 1 Bowl in San Marcos. The event was co-sponsored by Miller Lite Beer, Mazda and AMF. From the viewer response to this tournament's airing, more WWPB video tapings were booked, and at long last, the door to nationwide acceptance had opened.

In 1983, to more appropriately project its status as the most successful women's bowling organization in the world, the organization's title was modified to become the Worldwide Women Professional Bowlers. After seven years under that title, the WWPB membership voted to restore our more known organizational name of WESTERN WOMEN PROFESSIONAL BOWLERS, keeping membership open to all women bowlers who qualify and have an interest in participating in highly competetive events.