

# Sonny Steward Memorial Fund Established To Benefit Youth Bowlers

*The James "Sonny" Steward Memorial Scholarship Fund has been established to help youth bowlers following Steward's death on February 10, 1989 of heart and kidney failure. Those wishing to contribute should contact NCABA 2nd Vice President James B. Stewart (559-1798) or Past President Earl Hickerson (894-5736). What follows is a remembrance and partial biography of Steward, some of which was read at the Hospitality House in Arlington on the evening of October 21, 1978, immediately prior to Steward's induction into the Nation's Capital Area Bowling Association Hall of Fame.*

Sonny was born in Washington, D.C. on February 27, 1931 and grew up in this area. At 18 he went into the U.S. Army and was involved in the Korean War. He was wounded in this conflict and forever was confined to a wheelchair.

Formerly a fullback for the Washington Stonewalls, Sonny did not let his being in a wheelchair deter him from being active, as he became involved in ping pong, archery, wheelchair basketball, and announcing baseball games at the Michigan Park Playground.

Sonny discovered bowling in 1965 when he went to the National Wheelchair Games that were held annually in New York City.

In 1965-66 Sonny and his wife formed the Saturday Morning Junior Bowling League at Riggs Plaza. Neither one knew what the procedures were, but they soon learned. Many fine bowlers developed in this league.

Sonny began league bowling in the Wednesday Nite Mixed League at Riggs Plaza and his team won the championship in 1973-74 when the league became the Friday Nite Mixed 5's at Bowl America Silver Spring. His team also won league titles at Parkland in the Interfaith League (1966-69), and the Mixed Foursomes League at Fair Lanes University (1969-70 and 1972-73).

He won championship titles in the National Olympic Wheelchair Games for eight straight years until they dropped bowling as an event. In 1968 he won the National Wheelchair Bowling Association national championship with a record 602 series, Sonny's best ever.

His highest game was 250; his best average, 170.



He was champion of the Winston-Salem Wheelchair Regional Tournament for four years in a row from 1969 through 1972 and then again in 1975. Sonny also won the Richmond, Va., Wheelchair Regional Tournament in 1972-74.

He had the high series nationally for wheelchair bowlers with 593 in 1971 and again the next year with 563.

In 1969 Sonny was awarded a certificate of appreciation from the Evening Optimist International Club of Arlington. The next year he was the honorary chairman of the NCABA's BVL Fund Drive.

Sonny participated in the NCABA, *BOWL Magazine*, and Virginia State tournaments. He also rolled in the National Bowling Association's national and regional tournaments in Illinois, Indiana, California, Wisconsin, Georgia, and New Jersey.

Sonny was a delegate at the 1975 Atlanta Convention of the NBA and served on the board of directors of the Washington Bowling Senate.

In 1978, when he was inducted into the NCABA Hall of Fame, Sonny also was Bowler of the Year of the National Bowling Association.

Sonny always gave of his time to hold bowling clinics for the handicapped at the Veterans Hospital and the University of Maryland and was ready and willing to help when anyone called.

His giving, his courage, and his talent will long be remembered by everyone who knew him.