

Bob Gignac

March 18, 1940 -

Proudly wearing his Canadian mens' five-pin bowling gold medal, Cambridge's Bob Gignac thought back to his boyhood when doctors informed his family that he would probably be wheelchair bound by the time he was 40.

Instead, at 47, Gignac not only competed at the 1987 Canadian Five-Pin Bowling Championships in Winnipeg, but reached the pinnacle. That year he was the best there was.

Stricken in his youth with infantile paralysis, an affliction similar to polio, Bob overcame all the odds. He not only managed to walk, and bowl, but he became one of the city's most successful athletes.

Born in Parry Sound, Bob moved with his family to Wellington Street in Galt as a one-year-old. Bowling provided therapy in his early years as he chased pins at the Main Street alley in Galt.

From an early age he developed a love for the game, one that remains with him to this day. He subsequently spent a number of years working at Dickson Bowl, and after a time in Strathroy, he returned to Cambridge as owner of the Presto-Lanes Bowling Centre in Preston, where as late as the end of the 20th century, he could still be found working with the public during business hours and rolling his own game when the doors close.

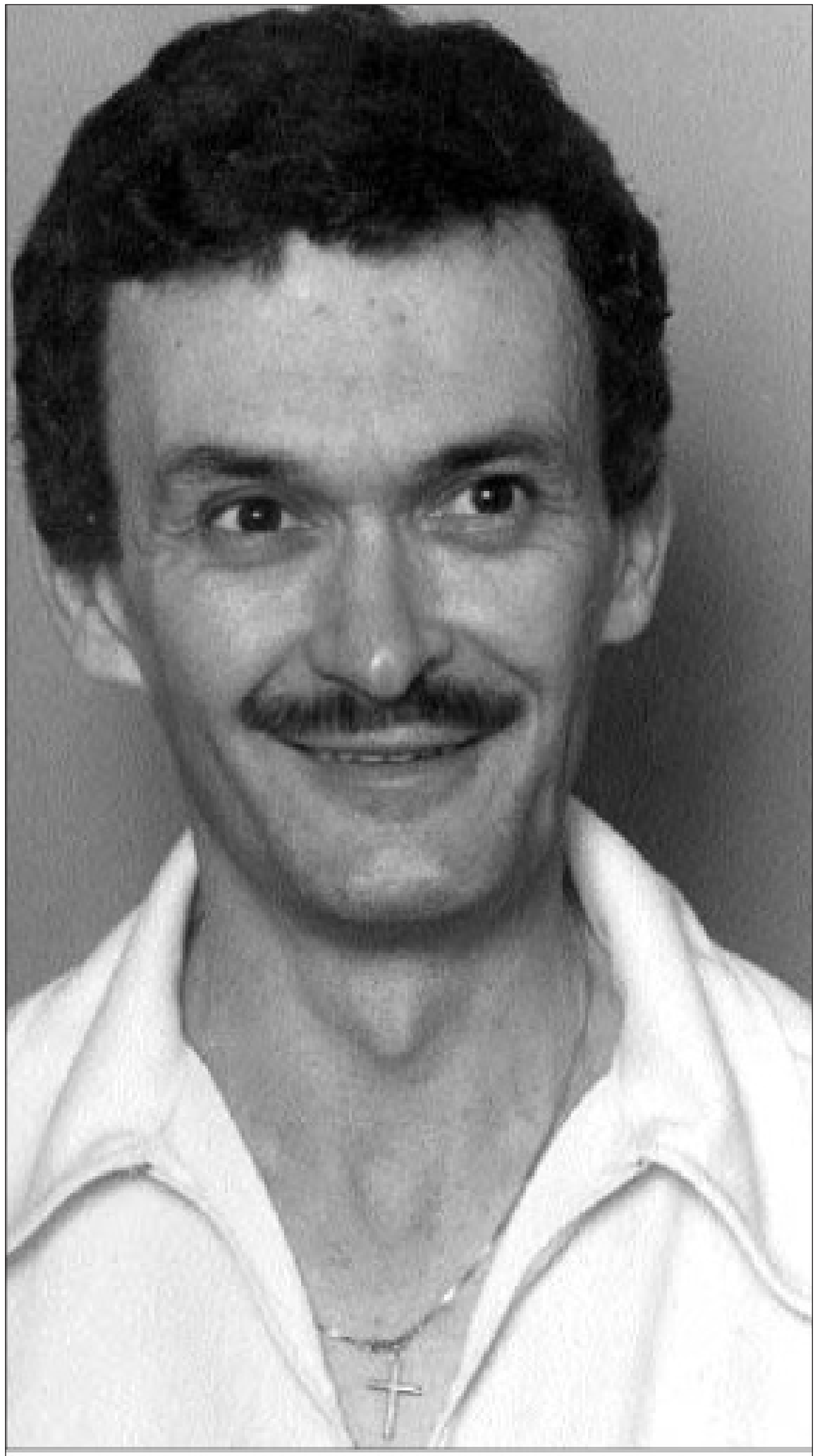
Gignac has represented his zone – it stretches from London and Strathroy through Cambridge – an amazing 22 times at the Ontario championships, but it wasn't until that magical year of 1987 when all the pieces fell into place.

Gignac's recipe for success is simple: concentration, determination, confidence, vision, and a certain amount of luck. He obviously had the winning formula in Winnipeg.

In a sport where athletes reach their peak at about age 30, Gignac was bowling against competitors many years younger. After a gruelling 15-game qualifying round, Gignac sat in second place with a superb 260 average. He went on to defeat Saskatchewan's Lloyd Wiens 333-285 in the semifinal, and then won the championship by besting P.E.I. bowler Dave Livingstone in the final.

Overcoming obstacles is the theme of Bob Gignac's life. With a spirit and a will to win which is second to none, Bob's successes read like a movie script. From struggling to walk during his childhood years to championship bowler, Bob Gignac was a champion long before he wore a gold medal around his neck.

His achievements serve as inspiration to us all.



Inducted 1999