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WORLD BOWLS HALL OF FAME
GEORGE HARTLEY ATKINSON (14 Oct 1920 – 31 Aug 1991)



It is with great pleasure that the President, Executive and Members of Bowls South Africa extend heartfelt congratulations to the family and friends of **George Hartley Atkinson** as an inductee into the **World Bowls Hall of fame**.

Those who attended the World Bowls Championship in South Africa in 1976 remember it as the greatest championship ever. Not only was the venue, Zoo Lake, fantastic but the crowd support of 10 000 spectators per day and the quality of bowls played was unprecedented.

The leadership of the organising committee was in the hands of prominent businessman and bowls administrator George Atkinson. The commentary about George in the official record of the Championships says it all: "Without any doubt, George, Honorary Life President of the South African Bowling Association, honorary life member of the Southern Transvaal Bowling Association, convenor of the national selection committee and generally known in South Africa as 'Mr. Bowls' deserves the accolade of 'a legend in his lifetime.'"

"His unparalleled career of bowls administration at all levels, including his two-year term of office as honorary secretary of the International Bowling Board and his managership of the Springbok bowls side in Worthing in 1972, was climaxed by his inspiring leadership and incredible efforts since November 1972 to ensure the success of the 1976 World Bowls Championship Tournament."

As convenor of the World Bowls 1976 Committee, through example, his pleasant personality and sense of humour, George received outstanding support from his colleagues which, in turn, contributed significantly to the team spirit which characterised the tournament committee.

George was a great leader and personality. The organising committee for World Bowls 1976 included 103 members of 23 sub-committees, including his wife Joan Atkinson leading the catering sub-committee – quite an undertaking.

The result for South Africa was overwhelming. The Men's team won the overall WM Leonard Trophy with a clean sweep of all four gold medals, which has never been repeated.

There were golds to Doug Watson in the singles, Kelvin Lightfoot, Bill Moseley, Nando Gatti and Kevin Campbell in the Fours, Moseley and Watson in the pairs, and Lightfoot, Gatti and Campbell in the triples.

As a bowler, it is noteworthy that George was 'capped' as a Southern Transvaal player and as such was a member of a fours team which won a South African Inter-District Tournament.

There is little doubt that George would have been an IBB president in the 1980s but for the Gleneagles agreement which banned South Africa from international sport from 1977 to the early 1990s.

George received the SA Sports Meritorious Award in 1975 for 'Sustained meritorious service to sport'.

This accolade is a fitting recognition of George's dedication, leadership and invaluable contribution to the sport of bowls.

The legacy George created, is proudly borne by his family members, wife Joan, children David, Alban and Jennifer, grandchildren Richard, Brett, Dale, Ashlyn and Jenna and Great Grandchildren Lily, Oliver and Pippa.



BOBBY DONNELLY
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER



sport, arts & culture

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