

Hall Of Fame Broadcaster Chris Schenkel Dies

Schenkel was the voice of the PBA Tour for 35 years

United States Bowling Congress Hall of Famer Chris Schenkel of Leesburg, Ind., one of the nation's most popular and widely honored sports announcers, died Sept. 11 after a long battle with emphysema. He was 82.

Schenkel was announcer for ABC-TV's Pro Bowlers Tour telecasts from 1962 until the telecasts were discontinued in 1997.

Also a member of the Professional Bowlers Association Hall of Fame, Schenkel covered virtually every major sporting event in his more than 60 years as a broadcaster, but was most closely associated with his commentary in bowling.

Schenkel, whose career brought him into contact with the all-time greats from virtually every sport, singled out his American Bowling Congress Hall of Fame induction in 1988 as perhaps the highest recognition he ever achieved.

"I'm flabbergasted," he said during his induction speech. "I've been honored similarly by the Professional Bowlers Association and now this from the amateur arm of bowling.



Where do I go from here?"

The late Roone Arledge was responsible for getting Schenkel into bowling announcing and from the very



In addition to his work on PBA telecasts, Schenkel served as Honorary Chairman for the International Bowling Museum and Hall of Fame. His contributions to bowling also were recognized as a Salute to Champions honoree in 1990.

Schenkel came to national attention as a radio announcer for N.Y. Giants football games and after joining ABC-TV became one of the network's primary college football announcers as well as a fixture on

ABC's Wide World of Sports telecasts. He covered major sporting events such as the World Series, golf's Masters, Kentucky Derby, Indy 500 and several Olympics.

Schenkel was named Sportscaster of the Year four times and was inducted into the Sportscasters Hall of Fame in 1981. He also earned an Emmy for lifetime achievement in 1993.

Schenkel is survived by his wife, Fran, sons Ted and John, daughter Tina and several grandchildren.

start it seemed to be a good fit for Schenkel. Schenkel always said, "The nicest athletes I've ever been around are bowlers."

Carmen Salvino

"Chris came to the PBA as one of the premier announcers and he gave the PBA a lot of credibility at that time. He had a golden voice. Not only was he a great announcer, but I have had dinner with him several times and he was a good human being. He never flaunted his position.

"He's right at the top as far as PBA legends go because he gave us credibility. We were a new sport on TV and when he came in he brought in a big following. Once people saw the show they loved it, but he brought a lot of people in to begin with. He has to be right at the top as a contributor to our sport.

"I know he loved the PBA. Of all the sports he covered, he always found time to go out with us guys. It always amazed me because he was a big name in sports, but he always wanted to hang out with the bowlers. If he came to Chicago he'd call me. We'd have dinner or go downtown and see a show. He loved hanging around the PBA guys. He was one of us and was like a brother to us. He wasn't just an announcer."

"It's been a tough year. First Dick (Weber) dies, my good friend and then I lost a younger brother to cancer two months after that. It hits home and makes you start thinking differently. Before Dick passed, I never even

thought of death. I thought we'd go on forever. Then my brother dies and I realize that nobody's infallible. When you're an athlete for some reason you think you're indestructible. At some point you realize you're just like every other human being."

Walter Ray Williams Jr.

"He was definitely a big name in sports and broadcasting. He had such a great voice and was a very personable guy. He was so easy to like and just a very nice gentleman. I really enjoyed meeting him and getting to know him. I wish his wife and family the best.

"It was kind of tough at the end of the last ABC broadcast. Chris and Bo (Burton) were in tears when they were saying goodbye. It was a pretty emotional moment.

"(Chris) was the broadcaster when bowling was at its biggest, in the '60s '70s and '80s, especially in the '70s. It was Burton and Schenkel. He was definitely a big part of bowling on TV. I think he added a lot of credibility to it and seemed to enjoy doing the telecast. We had one or two broadcasters over the years who didn't seem to care but Chris really seemed to enjoy the competition and the players."

Fred Schreyer, PBA President & CEO: "The entire PBA family is deeply saddened by the passing of Chris Schenkel. He was an accomplished professional and was the face of the PBA Tour on ABC for so many years. He was a wonderful ambassador for the sport of bowling, but more importantly, he was a genuinely good person who treated everyone with kindness and decency. He will be missed."

NBC Sports Executive Dick Ebersol: "In a business full of people in a hurry, he found time for everyone, no matter their station in life. He was certainly the best example of how best to conduct yourself when everyone is in too much of a hurry. Chris Schenkel was truly one of the nicest, most compassionate human beings I ever met in this business."

PBA star Brian Voss, as told to the Boston Globe: "Chris was irreplaceable in our sport. His voice became synonymous with our sport. In addition, he was a wonderful man. I'm fortunate enough to make it onto TV a lot, so I get to know the TV people. Chris was down-to-earth and a humble man.

"When you're bowling, and a guy's talking about you, you listen. And with Chris, it was all good stuff. I don't ever remember him saying anything bad about anybody. It's not always like that now."