

Greetings everyone,

As I sit here at the computer trying to provide some information about myself for those of you who do not know me, I am at a loss. I think I am still in shock from receiving my nomination letter and trying to figure out what I did in my shooting career that would make me worthy of this nomination. I am truly honored and humbled to be nominated because the list of past recipients includes some of the people that helped influence and develop me into the shooter I was in the early 2000's.

This shooting adventure started for me in 1997 when I was 16 years old and competed in the Miss Annie Oakley shooting contest in Greenville, Ohio and won. The local fast draw club at that time was the Shawnee Bandits and the members of that club thought it would be a great idea for the new Miss Annie Oakley to perform the opening shot of the contest that year. I was raised around firearms my entire life and enjoy hunting and I've always been comfortable around guns so when Duke and Carol Bonnett and Harry Ballengee approached me about fast draw, I decide why not (even though I thought these people looked funny shooting from the hip, with modified guns and wax bullets). Being a competitive person by nature, it didn't take long for me to become hooked, join the Shawnee Bandits and start shooting every weekend at our clubs' practice. Everyone in the Ohio Fast Draw Association was very welcoming and helpful, it was a great group of people to be associated with. Not long after, my parents, Greg and Mary, joined me and it was nice to compete and travel as a family.

As stated earlier, there were a lot of people wanting to help me get started. Carol Bonnett was always there for moral support and advice and let me use her holster and gun until I decided what I wanted to eventually purchase. Once I learned the basic draw and got comfortable with everything, Duke Bonnett instilled in me the grip it and rip it mentality and helped me a lot with reaction time and the mental aspect of fast draw. Jim Yurasek was also a huge influence in developing speed and the mechanics of my draw. He even invited my dad and myself to his place in PA to just practice fast draw and of course we didn't turn down the offer and made the drive. Who wouldn't want to learn from a Top Gun.

Once I got comfortable shooting in the OFDA, the next step was to join the World Fast Draw Association and compete there. That was a whole new game and experience, I was like a kid in a candy store, meeting and watching all the people I have heard stories about. Bob James, Nicole Franks, Alanna Blinn, Bob Arganbright (I love to watch this man shoot), Ron Bright, Gary and Joyce Tryon, Howard Darby, Cal Eilrich, Bob Mernickle, Jon Wilson (Trick Shot), Smitty Polhill, just to mention a few.

After College at Wilmington, I moved to Kansas to begin my AG teaching career and of course had to join the Kansas Fast Draw Association. Another great group of people, especially with me being 850 miles away from home, took me under their wings. Richard Parmentier (Outlaw), Miles and Anita Miller and G.W Jones will never know how much they helped me, being that far away from home and my family. It was always a pleasure and an honor to shoot alongside Richard in the Kansas shoots.

As far as awards and accomplishments, someone is going to have to do that research if you need the exacts. I had the honor of being awarded the OFDA Top Gun numerous times as well as several state shooting titles and have also been a proud member of the 5000 club, have blown my holster apart with blanks and have experienced the dreaded roman candle. Thinking back, my most memorable year shooting was 20 years ago in 2005 when my dad and I both finished 2nd overall in the World. We attended every WFDA contest that year, even the one held in Canada. I won my 5th straight world thumbing championship title and my first world contest (Wild West World Championship) at Gary and Joyce Tryon's shoot, in Florence Arizona. Even though I brought home a lot of hardware and have broken records, that's not why I competed. For me, it was a family affair and catching up with friends and just helping people, from setting up contests to letting a person who has never shot before use my stuff and have fun.

In closing, I just want to thank whoever nominated me to be to be a candidate for the Hall of Fame. When I decided to stop shooting, I guess I never thought I would have left an impact and have people still thinking about me today. The sport of fast draw took me all over the map and gave me the opportunity to travel and see a lot of our country. Finally, I'll leave with one of my favorite quotes from Annie Oakley. "Aim at a high mark and you will hit it. No, not the first time, nor the second, and maybe not the third. But keep on aiming and keep on shooting, for only practice will make you perfect. Finally, you'll hit the bullseye of success."

Jennifer Knicks