

2010 New Mexico Senior Olympics Courage Athlete Recipient



Max Pyeatt

88 years of age

Albuquerque, NM 87111

Bernalillo County

Nominated for the NMSO Courage Athlete Award by Susan Rice, Albuquerque 50+ Games Manager – NMSO Coordinator for Bernalillo County

Max's Olympic journey started with his handicapped grandson's swim coach who told Max about Senior Olympics and training at his pool.

In 1988, the first year he qualified for NG was here at NMSO in Albuquerque, his first wife became an invalid with neurofibromatosis, and he became the "chief cook, bottle washer and nurse." He kept up his swimming the next year with the new focus of keeping in shape to take care of his wife. The following year, Max added archery and shuffleboard to his list of sports by practicing in his back yard. When Max qualified to go to the National Senior Games (NSG), he was able to hire a person to look after his wife and he went.

Over the next few years, Max continued to undertake more senior Olympic sports as he learned air gun and table tennis. His wife passed in 1994. After that, he added badminton and basketball to his competition list. In the next year, Max lost three badminton partners due to heart attacks, but added many new friends at the National Senior Games in Oklahoma, Nevada, Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Virginia, and Colorado.

Air Gun was the sport that really paid off for Max. It was at an Air Gun Competition that Max met and married Norma Houston (another match made in Senior Olympics). They became partners in many of his sports and she introduced him to Track & Field competition. They qualified to go to NSG at Louisville, Kentucky, in 2007. Unfortunately, two weeks prior to the event, Norma had a severe stroke. The stroke affected her right arm and leg. Again Max became chief cook, bottle washer and nurse. With a lot of rehabilitation, Norma has made a good comeback.

Now it was Max's turn to "go downhill." In 2010, he was diagnosed with COPD, a respiratory problem. He is now on oxygen and "the works," as he calls it. Max wouldn't be stopped, even when pneumonia put him in the hospital at home. Max missed the swimming competition, but he was able to compete, and qualify for NMSO, in basketball free throw, shuffleboard singles and doubles, badminton singles and doubles, huachas, air gun, javelin, shot put, discus and standing long jump-carrying along his oxygen bottle everywhere he went.

Max enjoys his friends, fitness and the fun they both bring him. "May a lovely day go with whoever I meet."