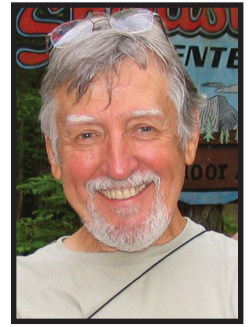


*Our Hero,
Horace Eckman!*

The Horace Eckman Archery Center **“A Dream Comes True in Jersey”** *by Gene Grodzki*

*Thank you,
Horace Eckman for your generosity!*



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*Gentleman Horace Eckman
standing in front of the Horace
Eckman Indoor Archery Center
he made possible for New Jersey*

Good News from New Jersey! Thanks to one man's unselfish generosity and a lot of sweat equity from members of two great clubs, archery in the New Jersey just took a major leap forward.

On January 13th, 2018 the first arrow flew to its mark in the brand-new Horace Eckman Indoor Archery Center. A special man shot it!

New Jersey is a small state but has the largest population per square mile in the USA. In 1971

Horace Eckman and crew standing in front of the Archery Center

New Jersey had 24 archery clubs and today we have less than 10. Despite those numbers archery is alive and well in New Jersey.

Two central Jersey clubs have managed to not only survive but to thrive. For nearly 60 years, the Garden State Archers (GSA) in Wrightstown and nearby Black

Knight Bowbenders (BKB) in Jackson have been friendly sister clubs. Both GSA and BKB boast beautiful 56 Target NFAA Field ranges and small club houses. Each club owns their respective properties, which is key to survival here in NJ where open affordable land is at a premium.



Horace Eckman approves of the progress of the NJ Archery Center

With Jerseys brutal winters both clubs each dreamed of the day that they could afford to build their own indoor ranges. It looked like that day would never come.....Then along comes a Hero!

Horace Eckman, a member of both clubs, shared in that very same dream, a year-round facility where all GSA and BKB members could comfortably shoot indoors.

At a monthly club meeting in 2016 Horace made a jaw dropping announcement. He would donate money equally to both Garden State Archers and the Black Knights to be used exclusively for the construction of an indoor range. Because both clubs are less than 10 miles apart and GSA property was more conducive for construction, the decision was made to pool the money and build one large indoor range on GSA property for use by both GSA & BKB. The dream was about to come true.

Architectural plans were drawn up and ground was broken in the summer of 2017. The result is a breathtaking 50' x 150' indoor archery complex featuring radiant heat in the floor, LED lighting, Big Shot target butts and 22

shooting lanes. Mark Machulsky, GSA President took point on construction and enlisted enthusiastic members from both clubs to do much of the labor. Horace stayed on top of every detail and logged more work hours on the construction than any other member. It was a massive undertaking with hundreds of hours work of sweat equity. The result is nothing short of fantastic.

At the ripe young age of 89 Horace has shot a bow for 65

years. Maybe that is why he looks 60 and acts like he is 21. Horace always has a smile to share and his humor is legendary. We laugh at his jokes more for his delivery than his punch lines. He's got a million of them.

Horace is still an active shooter who puts many of us to shame with either a compound or traditional bow. He is a kind man who has devoted much of his life to quietly promoting the sport and helping anyone anyway he could, especially youngsters and novices.

Horace's shooting partner for 65 years was his beautiful wife Julia. I was with the two of them on their 50th Wedding Anniversary where they celebrated by doing what they both loved, shooting their bows and sharing cake with the rest of us.

After serving in the Army, Horace became a master machinist and consultant. He worked at Princeton Forestall Labs and then at RCA Astro Electronics Aerospace machining parts for spacecraft and satellites, many of which are still in orbit. His position required a high-level security clearance and he was present and part of some very historic launches. He helped on site with the assembly of satellites and launch components, many of which carry parts he personally machined.



Horace checks out the range clock.

Horace has machined custom parts for race cars, shotguns and everything else imaginable. He especially enjoys designing parts for wheelchair bound and special needs archers many of which shoot at another great central Jersey club, the WaXoBe Archers of Monmouth Junction. WaXoBe boast a 28-target field course and a beautiful indoor range. They host many youth programs including the NJ Navigators Wheelchair Athletes, JOAD, Boy Scouts etc.

At his first field archery tournament at age 24, Horace showed up with 12 arrows and went home with 3 and he said he never had so much fun in his life. He was hooked. His first bow was a Damon Howett – Mamba but his favorite bow back then was his Hoyt Pro Medalist which he still occasionally shoots when he wants to give his current favorite, a Mathews compound.

When asked Why Archery? He responded that maybe it's because my Great-Grandfather was a full blooded American Indian, but more than likely it was simply the feel of a good shot and the hundreds of friendships I developed over the years.

The Eckman Range will be run by both GSA & BKB members and will host nightly leagues, open shooting nights, introduction to archery classes, JOAD, FITA, NFAA and Traditional Shoots and Indoor 3-D shoots.

Horace said that "My wish is that this building will serve as a hub that will help keep archery alive and growing in central New Jersey. It will be a place where children, youth, sports-



Inside the NJ Archery Center

men and women, some not even born yet, will pick up a bow and get the archery bug. He said, "Children and youth are the future of our sport and this building and archery will help keep their minds focused and their bodies strong and healthy. I've been lucky enough to have seen archery grow, from when your only choice was a longbow to today's marvelous compounds and I've loved every minute of it. Archery has changed in many ways but in many ways, it is still the same. Traditional or compound, it's still an arrow in flight."

Horace Eckman is the man

who shot the very first ceremonial arrow in the range he alone made possible. It was a special moment. That arrow will be mounted over the front door at the Grand Opening. I asked Horace what his most enjoyable archery moment was after a million arrows and a lifetime of shooting. He smiled and said, "I guess it was the day they broke ground."

Visit www.gardenstatearchery.com or www.blackknight-bowbenders.com for range or club information.

Editor's Note: Thank you Gene Grodzki for sharing this happening with our readers.



Eckman ribbon cutting group