



information acquired from the WSHPA Hall of Fame Book, newsletters and other sources

## BRONSON GENTRY

Detroit, MI

inducted 1995



Bronson Gentry has pitched horseshoes competitively for more than 30 years, winning his first tournament in 1958

His tournament championships include:

- City of Detroit
- Department of Recreation Playground Tournaments
- Department of Recreation District Tournaments
- City AAU Tournaments

- State of Michigan
- Michigan State AAU Tournaments, 1967, 1972 & 1974

Michigan State Fair Tournament, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972 & 1974

### Additional Achievements

International Freedom Festival Tournaments 1971 & 1972

National AAU Tournament 1971

As a horseshoe instructor, many of Gentry's students have gone on to become champions in their own right winning various City and State AAU Championships.

Bronson was the horseshoe instructor at the Maheras Recreation Area where he personally headed the long drive toward its development.

His success in the game of horseshoes and being recipient of the 1969 Lane Bryant National Volunteer Award have deeply enriched and inspired the lives of the great many youth and adults with whom he has been associated.



Bronson was awarded a life time membership to the WSHPA in 2002. Unfortunately "Pop" passed away on Mar 3rd, 2003 at the age of 78.

Press Clippings: [Detroiter wins horseshoe meet](#)  
[Horseshoe News Digest](#)  
[Outdoors in Brief](#)  
[Detroiter wins in horseshoe](#)  
[Horseshoe Champs](#)  
[Ferndale man sets pace in horseshoe meet](#)  
[4 Gain finals in Horseshoes](#)  
[Warren Pitcher Tops in Horseshoes](#)

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## The Horseshoe Pitcher's News Digest / July 1969 **Detroit, Michigan News Honors "Buth" Gentry**

Bronson "Buth" Gentry was a unanimous selection for the first Citizen-Police Award, presented by the Detroit News. The news story appeared in the Detroit News.

Gentry, a unanimous selection from a large group of nominees, will receive an engraved plaque and \$100.00 savings bond at a presentation ceremony at the Jefferson 5th precinct station by the Community Relation Committee on Monday, February 10th, The News story revealed.

An impressive array of judges participated in the selection of Gentry. They included William T. Patrick Jr., chairman of the New Detroit, Inc.; John Feikens, Detroit attorney and former co-chairman of the Michigan Civil Rights commission, and Carl Parsell, president of the Detroit Police Officers Association.

Bronson, along with many other responsible and concerned citizens residing on Detroit's near east side, was mainly instrumental in organizing a citizen's patrol committee resulting from a near riot disturbance the summer of 1966, the story continued.

The Gentry we know, a modest, unassuming, friendly, warm person, is the first to extend liberal credit to all but himself. We know, without the report, that a great amount of recognition must be extended to his attractive personable wife, Lois. She participates with many mothers who ride and patrol busses.

The combined community efforts of both mothers and fathers have prevented many of the youth of the community from getting into serious trouble. Working in close cooperation with business and police personnel, the committee often prevents its youth from having jail records the first time they get into trouble.

The Wolverine State Horseshoe Pitcher's Association extends its proud congratulations to the Bronson Gentry Family.

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## Spotlight On ... Bronson Gentry

### **"Life begins when you begin to serve and help others."**

Bronson Gentry is a pioneer for African-Americans in organized horseshoes. He was the first Afro-American to win the City of Detroit, State of Michigan and National AAU Championships. Bronson was the Michigan State Fair Champion six times and twice the International Freedom Tournament Champion. In 1978, the

Bronson's contributions to horseshoes are only a part of whom Bronson really is. His service to his community and to the people who lived there came first. Bronson was a leading force in getting the Stark Elementary School and the Maheras Recreation Center built. He founded Boy Scout Troop 187. He formed community

Michigan Amateur Sports Hall of Fame inducted Bronson, an honor bestowed at the time to one other horseshoe pitcher, Lee Jacobs. Bronson later received a Life Member Award from this Hall of Fame in 1980. The culmination, so far, of his horseshoe career is to have the Detroit horseshoe club named in his honor, the Pop Gentry Horseshoe Club. There is a remarkable story here which involves many facets of Bronson's rich and fulfilling life.

Before Bronson became involved with horseshoe pitching, African-Americans in Detroit knew very little about organized horseshoes. The rules and regulations were unknown that governed horseshoes. When African-Americans at the Maheras Recreation Center began entering local tournaments the only known rules were "alley rules." When these pitchers went to the district tournaments, they stood little chance of winning. Never playing on clay courts, their opponents throwing "Big Shoes" and coached by WSHPA members put the youth of the Maheras Recreation Center at quite a disadvantage.

The following year Bronson Gentry went to the, district tournament and found what the Maheras, youth had told him was true. Understanding the situation, Bronson approached one man John Phillip, who was coaching the Chandler Park youths. Bronson met with Mr. Phillip the next day.

What took place that day was the beginning of Bronson's horseshoe career. He received a set of the rules and regulations and was explained the game of horseshoes. Mr. Phillip gave Bronson a pair of Ted Allen horseshoes. For the next three months Mr. Phillip taught Bronson how to throw the turn and a quarter.

In 1956, Bronson began pitching in city and state AAU tournaments and WSHPA tournaments. The first WSHPA tournament he played in, was at Lake Orion. He passed the knowledge he gained in these tournaments to the youth and adults of the Maheras Recreation Center. It did not take long before.

groups that tackled the tough problems in his community. Bronson faced the ills of his community eye to eye and. never blinked. He helped in getting street lights placed at dangerous intersections. Through his actions his community became a safer place to live and a healthier environment for all.

Bronson was a leader of a volunteer anti crime patrol during the 1960's. He went into the streets with a large group of men to cool things down when a summer disturbance threatened to erupt into a riot. He earned the Police Citizen Award in recognition of his outstandingness to police-citizen cooperation and understanding. The Detroit News felt that Bronson displayed a unique sense of the individual's obligation to the community.

In 1969, Bronson received the Lane Bryant Volunteer Award for the most outstanding community service performed by an individual. There were six thousand people nominated for this award. The purpose of the award is to bring this work to public attention - not to whitewash social ills, but to highlight them and the positive action combating them. It is a tribute to those who would not - could not - be thwarted by the impossible. Among the judges for this award was Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon, Governor Richard Hughes of New Jersey and Lawrence Spivak, the producer of Meet the Press. The award was presented to Bronson in Washington, D.C., Along with the award came a \$5,000.00 prize. This was nearly the amount of money he earned in one year. Bronson spent this money for gifts to 900 youngsters at the Stark Elementary School, Christmas baskets for needy families, art supplies for the ceramics, art classes he taught, to the neighborhood Maheras Recreation Center and. to the youth in his horseshoe groups for new horseshoes and. T-shirts.

On December 2, 1969 the Michigan Legislature in House Concurrent Resolution No. 281 honored Bronson for winning the Lane Bryant Volunteer Award. The resolution in part said that

African-American youths and adults became champions in local, district, city and state AAU tournaments.

Bronson quickly became a top player in Michigan. It was unfortunate that during this time he did not compete in the Michigan State Championship Tournament because of other commitments. He was a threat to win any tournament that he entered.

Mrs. Lois Gentry wrote, "You must understand that my husband was not avoiding WSHPA tournaments. It just happened that the State AAU and the State Fair tournaments were held on Labor Day. Working with the youth and on city problems comes first with my husband. If he had put his volunteering time into practicing horseshoes, I knew he would have been a WSHPA Champion, often. The years that he did not pitch were due to his health. He has had a brain tumor, a triple heart bypass, torn rotator cuff in both arms, arthritis in both legs and strokes. He now wears a brace on his left leg from his hip to his foot. After all of this he is still trying to pitch horseshoes."

"Mr. Gentry, one of Detroit's most dedicated and responsible citizens, has an indomitable spirit in the preservation of the community and has initiated programs to combat many problems facing Detroit residents."

Bronson has received letters of recognition from President Richard Nixon, Governor William Milliken and Detroit Mayor Roman Gibbs. He and his wife, Lois, were guests of President and Mrs. Nixon at the White House.

. It was ironic that Bronson ended his tournament play at the same place he played his first tournament, Lake Orion. Bronson may no longer play in tournaments but we are sure he will be around cheering, and encouraging his club members on. Bronson truly cares and works for people in ways most of us dream about. We, the membership of the WSHPA, are proud to have such a fine man as Bronson Gentry as one of our members.