

KISHA EUBANKS HIGHTOWER

Kisha Eubanks Hightower, who started her bowling career at age 6 in the famed Silver Hill Strikers league, was a self-proclaimed “bowling alley baby” who roamed Bowl America Silver Hill while her parents bowled in leagues.

She rolled a back-up ball, and her father, a *very* competitive bowler, was not pleased. “You’re gonna do this right!” he told her. He would set up empty milk containers as bowling pins in the house to encourage her to practice. He had her work with instructor Berlin Myers at Fair Lanes University, and Myers would stand on a chair in an attempt to get her student to reach up with her arm in a position that would not result in that dreaded back-up ball.

ON THE LANES

Bowling Ball: **EBONITE** • Bowling Shoes: **DYNOTHANE**

HOME

Where do you live? **LAUREL, MARYLAND**

Car: **MAZDA MILLENNIUM**

Refrigerator: **KENMORE** • Dishwasher: **KENMORE**

Stove: **GE** • Cookware: **FARBERWARE**

Washer/Dryer: **GE** • Laundry Detergent: **TIDE WITH FEBREZE**

Sheets: **MARTHA STEWART**

BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Soap: **DOVE WITH ALOE** • Moisturizer: **OIL OF OLAY**

Lipstick: **MAC** • Mascara: **MAC**

Hair Product: **MOTIONS** • Perfume: **CURVE FOR WOMEN**

Toothpaste: **CINNAMON RUSH CREST**

Bath Accessories: **JC PENNY COTTON BLEND TOWELS AND WASH CLOTHES**

CLOTHING, ETC.

Jeans: **LEVI’S** • Sportswear: **NIKE**

Sneakers: **NIKE** • Dress Shoes: **NINE WEST**

Coat: **OLD NAVY** • Windbreaker: **OLD NAVY**

Day Bag: **NINE WEST** • Watch: **FOSSIL**

ELECTRONICS

Cell Phone: **NEXTEL** • Camera: **FUJI**

Computer: **DELL** • Internet Service Provider: **VERIZON**

Television: **SONY** • Stereo: **MAGNAVOX**

BEVERAGES

Soft Drink: **PEPSI** • Bottled Water: **DASANI** • Tea: **LIPTON**

Beer: **HEINEKEN** • Cocktail: **LONG ISLAND ICED TEA**

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD:

RIGHT HERE IN THE USA WITH ALL MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS

NECESSARY EXTRAVAGANCE:

GO SHOPPING!

“He would have me do unbelievable things, and I mess with them to this day,” she said. “I say, ‘Daddy, you used to torture me!’”

While bowling buddies such as Billy and Shawn Green, Kenny Lowe, and Maurice “Moe” Brown practiced after their youth league play, 9-year-old Kisha would note how they hooked the ball, and she decided to give it a try, but she didn’t exactly succeed at first.

“I *spun* the ball because that’s what I thought you were supposed to do,” she said. “Anyway, my father jumped up and said, ‘What did you do? Do it again! Do it again! That was good!’ Ever since then, I cannot back the ball up.”

As her teenage years progressed, however, she gradually moved away from the game, in part because few of her friends bowled, and she frankly got tired of having to leave sleepover parties early to bowl in her Saturday morning leagues. She later attended the University of Maryland from 1996 to 1999, where she majored in psychology and minored in sociology and occasionally bowled for fun in the Student Union Building.

“I would kick butt, but I just wasn’t really into it,” she said.

In 1998, Kisha returned to bowling one night when she substituted for her mother in the Friday Night Mixed Duos league at AMF Capital Plaza. That same year, her father had a serious accident, and her good friend Moe Brown finished the season for him. The next year, she bowled with Brown in that league, and, in her words, “that’s when I *really* started getting back into it—I was still carrying only a 160 or 170 average.”

As she worked with Brown on the lanes, her youthful experiences with the game, particularly her role as the “little sister” in the group, were always in her thoughts.

“Growing up with those guys, I was always the only *girl* around,”

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she said. “They would tease me: ‘You’re so sorry!’ But I just wanted to try. I kept at it, even with Moe—he would push me, and I’m like, *I’m gonna beat these guys one day!*”

Her parents—the father still recovering from his accident—would come out to the bowling center and constantly encourage their daughter.

“They *always* pushed me, even when I didn’t push myself,” she recalled. “‘You can do this! You can do this!’ Maybe they saw something that I didn’t see.”

She met her future husband, John Hightower III, in 1999 at AMF Capital Plaza, and while working with him, her father, and Moe Brown, Kisha’s average advanced the next year to about 180 and then it continued to rise, despite some rough spots with her husband on the lanes.

“We really went through a period,” she said. “He’s a true competitor, too, and carries about a 215-216 average. We’ve been married now going on six years this summer. When we first got married, we were bowling doubles together, and we had each other to rely on. But I would miss spares because I was still going through this period.

“Now, I’m confident in my spares, but back then I wasn’t. I would leave a 10-pin, and I was already thinking in my head, *This is an open*. But he bought me a spare ball—my

purple Minnie Mouse spare ball, and I love it—and that really has helped my game so much.”

Her enjoyment of the game grew, especially for tournaments.

“I have fun with my friends in league play, but it’s still on that competitive level,” she said. “In tournaments, I go into a different zone.”

A doubles champion with Angela Satterwhite in the 2004 WDCAWBA City Tournament, Kisha had runner-up finishes in the scratch and handicap team events later that year in the Guys & Dolls Tournament and also in the scratch team event of the 2005 WIBC Championship Tournament in Tulsa, Okla.

This past year has been her best in bowling. She won her first major singles title in January in Big Daddy’s Big Guns ladies scratch tournament in Philadelphia, an occasion that was extra special because her parents, Wil and Diane Eubanks—“the foundation of my bowling success”—were present to cheer her on.

In addition, Kisha rolled her highest series, a 768, in Williamsburg last summer, and top game, a 290, in September. She’s recorded at least 10 270-plus games and 700 series and over 20 250-plus games, and currently is averaging over 200 at several area centers,

including in the highly competitive Bottom Liners league at AMF Capital Plaza and RTR Classic at AMF Laurel.

She plans to make every effort to improve and learn more about the game and expose herself to more competitive events and ultimately pass this legacy on to her eight-year-old niece, Nakia, who just started bowling and loves it.

Off the lanes, she’s worked at the Department of Health & Human Services for seven years, first as a personnel assistant, but after a promotion last September, she’s now a human resources specialist who deals with senior executive services—top level government employees.

“I bring them on board, swear them in, and put them in the system,” she said. “It’s like from A to Z. And while they are on board, I do everything to help them maintain. If they have questions pertaining to life insurance or health insurance, taxes, or if they want to change their allotments or direct deposits, I’m the one. I actually key it into the system as well. A lot of the people I deal with correspond with the White House and the Senate—those are pretty high-demand people, but they trust me a lot!”