



**QUINTINA
JEFFERSON**
confronts the
"Mini-Bio"



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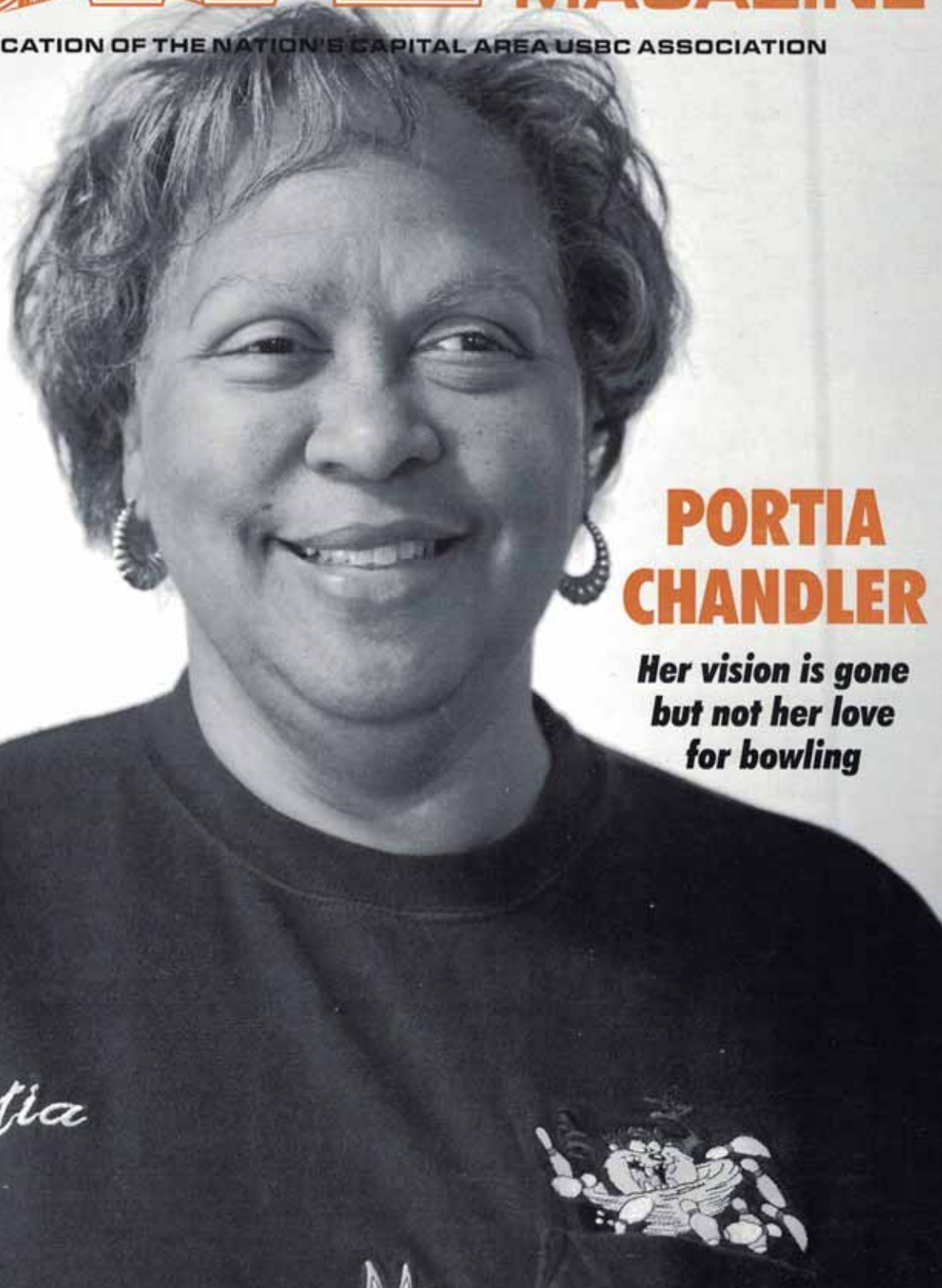
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MARY BROOKS
MY STUFF

YORK RANKIN JR.
*THE BEST BOWLING TIP
I'VE EVER RECEIVED*

HARLIN MATKINS
*BOWLING TRUISMS
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SUPPORT FOR BOWLERS
TODAY*

BOB KORTH
*TIGHT THUMBS, 10-PINS,
AND THE SEARCH
FOR A BOOK*



**PORTIA
CHANDLER**

*Her vision is gone
but not her love
for bowling*

Portia



20 QUESTIONS

Portia Chandler

It can be said that Portia Chandler literally views bowling much differently than her fellow bowlers in the New Generation league at AMF Marlow Heights because she's blind.

A few years ago, Chandler, a Bowie resident and a founding member of the Ladies of Distinction Bowling Club, noticed she had trouble reading while at her job as a budget analyst at the Department of the Army, so she went to see a specialist and later had laser surgery on her left eye with no success, even after a second operation. Her vision eventually began to fail in her right eye, but that doesn't stop her from competing in two leagues using a three-step approach, two fewer steps than what she used to take—and wants to take again.

She recently took the time to answer "20 Questions" from editor Bob Cosgrove.

How did you first get involved with bowling?

I bowled in a little high school league in 1968 at Ballou Senior High.

Is bowling merely an activity outside of the house or is it something you occasionally or often talk about and think about when you're away from the lanes?

It's something I talk about often—yeah. I've been bowling practically 40 years, so it's a part of me.

How long have you been visually impaired?

Probably the last four years, but I'm more visually impaired now than I was. I have no sight in my left eye, and I have probably 20 percent in the right eye which allows me to see the light and very little else—some silhouettes, dark silhouettes, like if you were to stand in front of me, I could see your silhouette. I couldn't pick you out of a lineup, but I would know there was someone in front of me.

What brought about your vision problems?

I had diabetes, and I paid it no attention and did things I shouldn't have done. It started with a detached retina in [my left] eye, and I lost the sight in that eye, and then I had a detached retina in the right eye. And I've had two surgeries at Johns Hopkins Hospital because I was losing my vision, and they thought they maybe could correct it—keep me with some vision. There's still hope that I might get something back so that perhaps some glasses can be worn, but so far it's been nine months, and I haven't gotten ... I'm nowhere near where I was before I had the surgery.

What are you able to see when you get up on the approach?

Absolutely nothing! On Monday, I have a guy that bowls on my team, Milton Bradley, and he situates me on the lane and tells me to keep [the ball] right out in front of me, which is what I usually do. When I need a spare, I know the pins, and he'll tell me, "You've got the 6-pin there," or "You've got the 10-pin there," and I just reach like I used to bowl when I had vision.

Do you still enjoy the game as much as you did previously?

I do, I do, I really do. In fact, I enjoy it more because it's something I didn't think I'd ever be able to do again. So I'm enjoying it more. I tell them all the time when I knock down two or three pins, I come here for *fun!*

When you do well, do bowlers jokingly question your vision?

They're always saying that! In fact, this past week, I threw a double, and they were going off big time: "I don't know how you're doing that!"

How do you travel to the center?

My husband takes me. Once I get there, my Mom, who used to bowl in that league, or one of the fellas on my team will see me or I'll call them to the desk, and they'll come and get me.

Your husband doesn't bowl?

Oh, no—never has. And I've been married 35 years. He's never bowled, but he takes me to the bowling alley.

What, if any, benefit do you believe you have as a blind bowler by earlier having partial sight versus a bowler who was blind from birth?

I know where the pins are because I did bowl. One of my problems right now that Milton tells me is that because I was a bowler that used the arrows and all that kind of stuff, sometimes I'm learning a totally different way to bowl now because I always relied on the marks on the

floor to gauge my bowling, but now it's strictly, you know, what he tells me in hand placement and stuff.

What about lane conditions—is he able to say, “They’re a little dry today” or “They’re slick”?

He tells me a lot of times that the back-end is breaking hard. He tells me that kind of stuff, so therefore he'll situate me on the lane—on the approach—whereby my ball will react in a better way. Most times, I get it down there like I'm supposed to.

When you miss, do you blame Milton?

No, I do not! He blames me: “Didn't I tell you...?” And I say, “Yeah, and I was *trying!*” We have a good time with that one.

Have you competed in any tournaments for blind bowlers?

No, I have not, but I probably will.

What is your high game, series, and average?

I've had a 269 game, and last week I had a 133. And I was happy with that—a 133, a 131, and a 104. I'm averaging probably about a 1-0-something, where before I was about a 165 [-average] bowler.

How are you aware of what your score is in the seventh or eighth frame?

I'll be asking them. I'll ask anybody, “What frame are we in? How much do I got?” If I start out with two or three opens, I usually can count up to realize just about where I am. I tell them, “Are we just about in the

sixth frame?” I don't keep up with the total, but I pretty much keep up with the frame.

How important is hearing in your bowling?

It's very important because it helps me be a part of what's going on. I often tell my teammates, “Oh, that sounded like a strike,” or “Oh, that was big!” or “Did you split because that sounded dead?” Hearing is *very* important.

What would you say is your immediate bowling goal?

Right now, I'm trying to get self-sufficient. Therefore, I'm trying, when I get up on the lane, to count my steps as to how many steps I take to get to where I can just, you

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Following a New Generation league session at AMF Marlow Heights, Nelson Bradley stands beside teammate Portia Chandler, just as he does during every frame she bowls in the league. He picks up her ball from the return and has the three holes facing her to facilitate her finding her grip. Bradley then lines her up on the approach, and, after each toss, tells her what pins remain standing. After again retrieving her ball, he guides her to the appropriate spot on the approach to attempt her spare.

CHANDLER, from page 9

know, start my approach. I'm trying to count also how far I am from the ball return going left or right so that I can become self-sufficient in bowling.

What weight bowling ball do you use?

I think I have about a 13 [-pound ball]. Nelson was saying we might go a little lighter.

Do you engage in other sports activities or hobbies?

Right now, I volunteer at a food bank at my church, and I do a lot of walking treadmill in my neighborhood with girlfriends and things like that.

What have you learned being blind versus when you had sight?

I'm more tolerant of a lot of things now. And patience ... I've learned a little bit more patience. One of the things that I have also learned is not to be fearful because fear will keep you from doing anything. I'm not one to jump out and say I can do everything, but I'm going to try.