

Entertainment News: Howard Fagenholz, Entertainer at Chicago's Marigold Bowl, Dies at 88

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 6, 2017 - 10:26pm

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CHICAGO – He was all Chicago, from his birth on the West Side to his passing on the North Side, blocks from Wrigley Field and his beloved Chicago Cubs. Howard Fagenholz's family owned the Marigold Bowl near the corner of Grace and Broadway from 1941 through 2004. He was a lifelong entertainer at the bowling alley, combining his bellicose and sentimental virtues as a bartender and counter worker there, which earned him the nickname "Uncle Howard." Fagenholz died in his sleep of natural causes on June 30th, 2017. He was 88.



Howard Fagenholz of Marigold Bowl, Chicago
Photo credit: Fagenholz Family

He was born to lawyer Fred Fagenholz and the former Myrtle Arkin in 1928. His mother's family was close to the George Halas family, so Howard was used to having Chicago Bears football players like Sid Luckman hanging around – he was at old Comiskey Park watching the Bears vs. the Chicago Cardinals when he heard of the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor. But his first sports love was the Chicago Cubs, and he was awarded the privilege at age 16, with going to all seven games of the 1945 World Series, the last one the Cubs would be in until 2016 – when of course they won it all – and those who knew him swore that the Cubs did it for Uncle Howard.



Howard Fagenholz, Marine, Circa 1948

Photo credit: Fagenholz Family

He joined the Marines in 1948, and when his father took ill, got a ride home from Secretary of the Navy John L. Sullivan. The story was chronicled in the Chicago Sun-Times by Irv Kupcinet, in his legendary “Kup’s Column.” Also while in the Marines he shared an elevator with Eleanor Roosevelt, and was mentioned on air by the booth announcers when he took a break to see the Chicago Cubs at Ebbets Field in Brooklyn.

At the advent of television, Marigold Bowl was – because of its proximity to WGN-TV in Chicago – the perfect place to do bowling shows. Howard often appeared with Chicago TV legend Ray Rayner on those shows in the early years, and would turn up later on “The Sportswriters on TV,” a popular Chicago sports show in the 1980s. His business partnership with Chicago Bear Rick Casares would yield a quick appearance on “The Ed Sullivan Show” in the 1950s, when Casares was introduced in the audience.

But it would be Marigold Bowl that would give Howard his happiest times. After living away from Chicago from 1964 through 1967, he rejoined the alley and stayed there until his retirement in 2004, when the building was sold and torn down. His night shift job gave him plenty of opportunity to go to Wrigley Field and see his beloved Cubs, especially during the 1970s. Two of his favorite Cub players were pitchers Bill Caudill and Randy Martz, and the three became lifelong friends.



Fagenholz Family at Marigold Bowl (Howard on Right)

Photo credit: Fagenholz Family

The last years of his life were characterized by his ever-presence at Marigold Bowl, and the Fagenholz family continued the tradition of opening its doors to bowlers of any race, creed, color, and sexual orientation, despite the prevailing attitudes in the timeline of its operation. Marigold Bowl sponsored the first league for Japanese Americans after the prejudices of World War II, and welcomed the first gay leagues into the lanes as the neighborhood around them was ever changing. For their consistent expression of human rights, Marigold Bowl was honored by induction into the Chicago LGBTQ Hall of Fame in 2009. Uncle Howard also starred in a series of comedy videos in the 1990s and 2000s – the infamous “Top Tens” – through the bowling league known as Gutter Chaos. They, and he, were there on the last night of the bowling alley, in 2004.

Howard Fagenholz was married three times, and is survived by his brother Robert Fagenholz, sons Gary Cardi and Frank Albinder, granddaughter Nicole Cardi Robertson, two great grandchildren, nephew and niece Freddy and Lori Fagenholz, and a grand niece and two grand nephews. He is also survived by the many friends, bowlers, and fellow travelers who encountered him over the years, touched by his combined joke-telling and combative kvetching style. He died peacefully in his sleep on June 30th after collapsing in his North Side apartment four days before. He was exactly 88-and-a-half years old.

Uncle Howard always liked to express this sentiment, borrowed from the 1942 film “Yankee Doodle Dandy”... “My father thanks you, my mother thanks you, my brother thanks you, and I thank you.”

Funeral services for Uncle Howard Fagenholz will be held Friday, July 7th, 2017, at 10:30 a.m., at Weinstein & Piser Funeral Home, 111 Skokie Blvd., Wilmette, Illinois. Howard Fagenholz, 1928-2017.



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