

Honoring A Legend: USA Shooting Launches Lones Wigger Endowment & Legacy Project

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado (February 16, 2017)



The word “legend” is an overused descriptor in the American lexicon, particularly when describing our sports heroes and all-time greats. In the case of three-time Olympic medalist, 24-time World Champion, 33-time world-record holder, and 91-time National Champion **Lones Wigger**, it is truly the only word fitting enough. There’s no hyperbole when using legend to describe perhaps the best marksman the shooting sports has ever seen.

USA Shooting has chosen 2017 as the year they’ll honor Lones Wigger’s enduring legacy to the sport with the official launch of the **Lones Wigger Endowment and Legacy Project**. That initial effort began last week with announcement of the [Lones Wigger/USAS Jr Olympic Endowment](#), in partnership with the MidwayUSA Foundation. Money put toward that endowment will be used to support youth and Junior Olympic initiatives in the future. Every dollar raised in 2017 is being matched 2-to-1 by the generosity of the MidwayUSA Foundation, which means that for every \$1,000 donated in the name of Lones Wigger, \$3,000 will go towards benefiting youth shooting programs in the future.

Now, the organization’s next step in honoring the man who always put results and his sport first, comes in renaming the USA Shooting headquarters after him. In celebration of his accomplishments in the sport, as well as his 80th birthday on Friday, August 25, USA Shooting will officially dedicate and rename the USA Shooting headquarters as the **Lones Wigger Legacy Hall & Shooting Center**. A big celebration will take place to kick-off the organization’s alumni reunion, Hall of Fame induction and Coach Conference, all taking place in Colorado Springs that weekend. The collection of people on-hand to pay their respect to this great competitor, friend and mentor will be impressive and fitting for the type of character Wigger displayed throughout his illustrious career.

[**Help honor the legend of Lones Wigger with your generous donation today!**](#)

Among his biggest admirers is long-time teammate and fellow Hall-of-Famer Lanny Bassham, who tried to provide the perspective necessary in describing Wigger:

"How do you define 'The Best Ever?' Would you add up the total medals won to see who is on top? Would you add up the total number of years he has dominated his sport? Would you take a survey of everyone who has been his competitor to determine who received the most votes? Would you look at the number of national and world records held? Not only is Wigger the only name at the top of these lists, no other shooter even comes close.

I am so fortunate to have been his teammate during the 70s. Those were good years for USA rifle. We held all the world records, all the world titles, and Wig lead the way. Oh, some of us had short bursts of brilliance – winning a gold medal or two – but he was the base, the foundation that gave us those many team titles and records. Of all the champions I have faced, he was always the hardest to best.

Early in my career, I asked Wig for some advice on reading the wind.



His answer was short and to the point, "Pull the trigger at the right time!" I learned how to read the wind by watching him shoot when we were on separate relays. He is still the master at knowing when to shoot.

Lones Wigger is a master of shooting in adverse conditions. When the wind is blowing the targets off the frames or switching 180 degrees every second; Wig wins. If he only has one minute to get off his last 10 shots, Wig wins. If the weather is so cold your finger freezes to the trigger guard, Wig wins. When I make a list of the Best Ever, Wig wins!"

Paying homage to a man who has meant as much to his sport as any icon in history is no easy feat. An enduring endowment supporting the thing that matters most to him – like the preservation of youth shooting and the Junior Olympic program he helped build – is a start. The renaming of USA Shooting headquarters will serve as a constant reminder as to the wide-ranging impact Wigger had while dedicating much of his life to the sport. Reliving some of the tales told by his teammates, alum and USA Shooting Team members, also helps rekindle memories of a storied career.

His records and accomplishments are as numerous as they are lofty, a career résumé never to be matched. A four-time Olympian with three Olympic medals and a total of 111 international medals, Wigger was named one of the U.S. Olympic Committee's 100 Golden Olympians in 1996, as well as earning induction into the USOC's Hall of Fame in 2008.

Noted shooting sports historian Hap Rocketto summarized Wigger's career like this in a [March 2016 story for the NRA](#): "The record shows that for 25 years no one prepared as well, was as persistent and determined, worked as hard, or wanted victory more than Wigger."

In a March 1987 interview for *Sports Illustrated*, Wigger discussed his philosophy of success: "In shooting, it's persistence that pays the biggest dividends — constant, steady practice, week in and week out, all year long. I truly believe that anyone can be a champion marksman if they work at it long and hard enough."

After a distinguished 26-year career in the U.S. Army, including two tours of duty in Vietnam, he retired in 1987 and went to work for the National Rifle Association (NRA) as the Director of Training for the U.S. Shooting Team until retirement in 1994. Shooting has been a life-long affair for Wigger, who still comes to work every day at USA Shooting as a volunteer, giving his time and energy to the only sport he's truly ever loved. He also has served two stints on the USA Shooting Board of Directors from 2005-2008 and again from 2013-2016.

All donation amounts will be accepted for the **Lones Wigger Endowment & Legacy Project** and a special Lones Wigger pin is being created to provide to donors at all levels. Additionally, six primary donation levels have been established with donors contributing at those designated levels set to receive authentic donor premiums showcasing Lones Wigger's career accomplishments. Donor premiums can be used to further the conversation with others about Wigger's legendary career and further supporting the project. Donor premiums are currently being created and will be unveiled in a pending announcement.

Donor Levels

- World Record \$10,000
- World Champion \$5,000
- National Champion \$2,500
- Gold Medal \$1,000
- Silver Medal \$500
- Bronze Medal \$250

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Lones
Wigger

Olympic Shooting Legend

