



2006 Photographer-of-the-Year Award

Charles T. Bennett (Chuck) Anderson, Indiana

My photo background goes back to as early as fifth grade. By that time, my father had me in his home darkroom processing and printing my own black and white film. Through high school, it seems I always had a camera on my shoulder, as I was both a school newspaper and yearbook photographer. After school, I had a part-time job in a custom color photo lab.

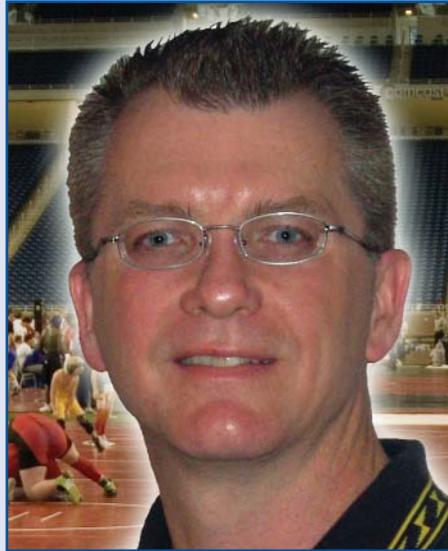
In 1980 I enlisted in the U.S. Navy to become a USN Photographer's Mate. This provided me an introductory technical education in just about every aspect of photographic imaging. I then specialized in the photographic intelligence, photographic quality control and maintenance end of things, while also qualifying for photo flight duty.

Upon leaving the Navy in 1988, I went to Eastman Kodak Company's Research Labs as a digital imaging research technician. This was when Photo CD was being developed, and digital imaging was about to be introduced to the mainstream consumer. It was fascinating to see what could be done with computer images, and to be involved with the transition from photographic imaging to digital imaging... to see the foundations of an older technology support the horizons of a newer technology. By this time, my picture taking had tapered off substantially. I was content to allow my wife to document our three kids growing up with her point-and-shoot camera.

I currently work for Kodak as a Field Engineer for their Health Group, servicing and maintaining Kodak's medical imaging equipment in medical facilities throughout the Midwest states.

My love of photography has been rekindled with the availability of high quality digital SLRs, and two teenage sons who are avid wrestlers. I have thoroughly enjoyed photographing their wrestling, and have extended that joy to shooting both our high school and middle school wrestling teams, as well as our local clubs.

When it comes to my wrestling photography, my greatest sense of reward comes from getting recognition for the kids who dedicate themselves to this fine sport. I



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believe wrestling is a sport that builds honor and character. These are traits that should be rewarded. So, when I can get a kid's wrestling photo published, I'm going to. It's wonderful to see a kid when he sees his picture in the local paper, or in his yearbook, or on the Indiana State Wrestling Association's website, or better yet, inside or on the cover of *Wrestling USA Magazine*.

I approach every season with the goal of shooting every team/club wrestler I can. At the end of the season, I have a CD/DVD for each wrestler with every image I captured of them. For many of these kids, these are the only photos they have of their wrestling. I have become the "Team Photographer", and love every minute of giving the kids images of their wrestling. These kids work hard all season. My hope is that they will have a few memories that will last forever in the images I provide them.

Twenty-five years after I shot my last yearbook photo and graduated, my high school yearbook is once again using my photos for its annual wrestling spreads. I have also been blessed with a wonderful relationship with Richard Torres, the sports writer for our local newspaper, *The Herald-Bulletin*. Richard has done so

much to bring our local wrestling programs to the attention of our communities. He has allowed me every opportunity possible to shoot for them and has run countless photos and articles on our local wrestlers. Richard has been a wonderful partner for bringing well-deserved recognition to our wrestlers.

The greatest joy I have felt as a result of my wrestling photography came this year when I worked with Kyle Poyer, the Anderson Highland High School coach, to provide unique end of season gifts to our graduating seniors. Having shot most events throughout the season, I had a large enough collection of images of each senior that we could put together a pictorial essay of the season for each senior. After all the time spent doing custom layout for each wrestler, we had each project professionally printed into a leather-bound, hard cover "coffee table" book commemorating the wrestler's final wrestling season. After the books were passed out at the awards ceremony, many of the parents were in tears. That's when I knew the many hours of shooting and post-production were worthwhile. I believe my simple wrestling action photography will help preserve life-long memories for a few very special young men. Maybe someday, one of these young men will open those pages, point to a photo, and say to a child "this was Daddy back when he wrestled...", and just maybe, his next generation will wrestle.

If I were to make a recommendation to photographers just starting out, it would be to go digital, and shoot lots of matches. Wrestling, like any sport, has its own nuances. It will take practice to learn to recognize the good move about to happen. Digital offers increased image capture and immediate feedback. If you're not a wrestling clinician, have your images critiqued by wrestlers. They can be the best source of feedback as to good wrestling action.

I want to thank *Wrestling USA Magazine* for this incredible honor. It's been a joy to see some of our Indiana wrestlers on your pages and covers. I truly appreciate the honor and recognition that you bring to wrestlers all over the country.