

THE LEGEND: WILLIE WALLEYE A LOCAL ICON

Section Two

Willie Walleye, the 40-foot, 2½ ton fish which has come to symbolize the Walleye Capital of the World, has held a prominent position in the Baudette, Minnesota community for 50 years since the monument was first erected and dedicated during Walleye Days, June 19-20, 1959.

The history books report that while the fish was being created, the local Civic and Commerce Association was trying to decide on a name for the fish. The first suggestions were Mr. Walleye and King Walleye. It was decided to choose the name democratically and a ballot with five names on it was printed in the Baudette Region. Wally, Walter and Willie were the additional names on the ballot. After several weeks of voting, the name Willie won.

What isn't clear in the history books is why and how Willie Walleye, this local icon, became such a legend – but you'll find stories on the pages which follow that will help you understand why Willie is so important to the people of this community.