



Ed Gilmore
Milestone, 1979

When Ed passed away in June, 1971, slightly more than three months after he shared in the creation of CALLERLAB, it brought to a close a very special era for square dancing. Among the hundreds of tributes paid to Ed was this from Dorothy Stott Shaw: "Of all the people who have continued to work with square dancing over a long period of time, Ed has stood at the top for steadfastness. With his great gifts of rhythms, music, pattern, and the spoken word, Ed could have amassed a small fortune against this day. He could have been the greatest razzle-dazzle traveling caller of the country, He could have thought up more 'new' figures and more complicated ones and more 'challenge' than any other ten callers put together. His are so many gifts! But he didn't take that line. He stood fast for the beauty of forms perfectly executed to the pattern of music; he stood fast for clarity of design and the execution of the design. He stood for grace of mind and spirit as well as for the physical grace of movement. It is hard to decide to give people what they ought to have instead of what they think they want. Ed decided to do this and how grateful we all are!"

Ed, who started calling in 1947, attended the Lloyd Shaw summer seminar in Colorado the following year and was soon conducting callers schools on his own. It is doubtful that anyone has conducted more callers classes than Ed did over a period of more than two decades. In many areas he would return year after year to indoctrinate new callers as well as provide continuing instruction and encouragement for veteran callers. During his lifetime Ed plowed back into the activity virtually every penny he received from it.

In March, 1971, Ed returned to Hibbing, Minnesota, where on previous occasions he had trained many callers. Shortly after his arrival he was taken to the hospital for observation, and though quite uncomfortable, he conducted what must have been the most unusual callers course of them all. Allowed only one or two visitors at a time, the entire enrollment of the course settled down in the reception room of the hospital, each member waiting his turn to talk with and be coached by Ed.

Among his many accomplishments, Ed was one of the founding fathers of the Annual National Square Dance Convention, was a recipient of the Silver Spur Award and a member of the Square Dance Hall of Fame. Although much of his time was spent on the road, calling at festivals and special events and conducting callers classes, he always maintained a strong home-club program.

To those who knew and admired Ed over the years it would seem inexcusable not to include Dru, his wife and constant partner, in all his dance activities. "Comfortable Dancing in the Proper Spirit", was the by-word of the Gilmores and they broadcast it wherever they went. While Ed did the calling for dance groups and taught budding callers, Dru worked quietly in the background, the ever-present, perfect example of the "caller's partner." Dru passed away in 1982.