

Life (Gold Card) Membership
48th CALLERLAB Convention
Tuesday, April 25, 2023
Presenter: Mike Olivieri

The Gold Card, “Life Membership” in CALLERLAB may be given in recognition of service to CALLERLAB. It may be presented to long term CALLERLAB Members who have provided outstanding service to CALLERLAB, and been selected by representatives of the membership (the EC) to be honored in this way. It may be given to callers who have retired from active calling. Under special circumstances, as determined by the EC, the Gold Card may also be given to CALLERLAB Members who are still actively calling. The list of those who have been given this recognition is short. It includes people who have worked very hard and very selflessly to enhance CALLERLAB. This organization has many ways of recognizing its Members, and in some cases even non-members, for their contributions to the square dance activity. The Gold Card is reserved for those who have worked to make CALLERLAB a more valuable and successful leadership organization. The service that our Gold Card members have given has come in many forms.

There have been 26 Gold Card Lifetime Awards given out previously with the first one being in 1978.

Daryl Clendenin, Ed Foote, Betsy Gotta, Jon Jones, Melton Luttrell, Mike Seastrom. Congratulations to you all but now let’s talk about this year’s award winner.

This year’s recipient started his senior year of high school in the fall of 1965 where he learned to square dance with his parents. The caller was one of the teachers in the school. In the spring of 1966 the caller began teaching our recipient to call singing calls. During the summer, the caller worked with him on learning to call patter, which our recipient admits he struggled with. Our award winner called throughout his years in college and while he was in the Army and continues to call today. In fact, the only time he has not called regularly since 1986 is the eight weeks he was in basic training and during the COVID pandemic. In the mid-1970’s, he met the love of his life and they were married in 1977. She did not square dance when they met but she took lessons with our recipient as her class angel. They have been married for 46 (2023) years and though she does not often travel with him, she is very supportive in all he does with the square dance activity.

He has called in over 46 states and three provinces in Canada. He has appeared in television and radio interviews about square dancing and has been a part of a television show produced in Nashville, TN. He has called at over 27 National Conventions and numerous state and local festivals and conventions around the country. He has been the featured caller at over 10 state conventions and has been a staff caller for multiple annual weekends, too many to count.

He began recording square dance songs in 1985 and has recorded over 28 songs on six different labels, including being one of the CALLERLAB members who recorded “God Bless the USA” in 1999 and “God Bless America” in 2009.

But what about his contributions to CALLERLAB?

Our caller was invited to join CALLERLAB in 1976 when membership was by invitation only. He accepted and became an accredited member of CALLERLAB at that time.

In 1991 he became a CALLERLAB Accredited Caller coach. That same year he began teaching at callers schools and has conducted caller’s seminars and workshops throughout the United State and Canada. He firmly believes in the development of new callers and the continuing education of established callers. In addition to his teaching dancer classes, conducting caller schools, and holding leadership and training seminars, he and Jim Mayo co-authored a book on choreography called “Standard Choreography”, which was published in 1997. Designed with the newer caller in mind, it provides examples of danceable choreography from standard concept.

In 1991 he was also elected to the CALLERLAB Board of Governor’s where he would serve for 12 years, retiring from the board in 2004. Six of those years were on the Executive Committee and for 2 years, from 1996-1998, he served as Chairman of CALLERLAB.

Our recipient has also chaired and participated in numerous committees at CALLERLAB conventions. As The Foundation Committee Chairman he raised over \$100,000 for the Foundation. He has shared his expertise at CALLERLAB by also serving as a panelist and moderator on many panels.

However, his leadership is not limited to his CALLERLAB experience. In addition to being a huge part of the CALLERLAB organization, our recipient has been a presenter at over 8 dancer leadership seminars, 16 CALLERLAB National Convention Training Seminars, and 26 callers’ seminars. He has also conducted over 42 full 40-hour caller schools and seminars.

His love and passion for the square dance activity expands beyond the dance floor. He is honored and respected by the dancing community. It started in 1986 when he started calling, continues today, and extends far beyond the dance floor. His dedication to grow and improve all square dance clubs, dancers, and callers is still ongoing. He has started numerous clubs, brought in and taught an uncountable number of dancers, and coached and mentored hundreds of callers. I was fortunate enough to attend one of those schools and learn from him. One of the first statements made at his caller’s school was, “If you’re in this for the money, there’s the door. If you’re in it for the love of the sport, you’re in the right place.” His mentoring did not stop after graduation from caller’s school. To this day I still ask for his advice and help with problems or situations I encounter as a caller. His

philosophy is that "Square Dancing Should be Fun". He truly cares about the dancer, his fellow callers whether new or having been around for a long time, and the square dance activity as a whole. Since he started calling, he has always represented CALLERLAB and the best CALLERLAB has to offer whether it be as a dancer, a caller, a leader, or just himself. He takes pride in his membership and promotes CALLERLAB to all the new callers he helps to teach and mentor.

As I stated before, the Gold Card award started as a way to recognize retired callers but exceptions have been made over the years. This is one of those exceptions. With that in mind it is my honor and privilege to present the CALLERLAB Life Membership Gold Card to a still very active caller, Mr. Jerry Junck.