



Joe Lewis
Milestone, 1975

Few callers have influenced more dancers and callers and the square dance activity as a whole, than has Joe Lewis. A native Texan, Joe and his wife, Claire, became a part of square dancing in the mid 1940s. Soon after starting to dance, Joe was talked into trying his hand at calling and, needless to say, after that his life was never quite the same. Eventually Joe and Claire built and operated their own square dance hall in Dallas and maintained a most successful home-club and class program.

Joe's unique style and upbeat delivery made him extremely popular on the traveling caller syndicate. Each year he traveled to about thirty-five states and Canadian Provinces. In the early 1950s, Joe and Claire were invited to visit Australia and introduce Australians to the wonders of American square dancing. So successful was the visit that the Lewis' were invited to return on two different occasions. Joe interjected into calling a more modern sound involving a closer harmony of voice and music plus some syncopation, and has been credited with originating the style popular today. He recorded about seventy sides and has

written many dances that will continue to be "favorites", including "Jellybean" and "Alabama Jubilee".

Joe was a founding member of CALLERLAB and a member of its Board of Governors. In 1961 he was inducted into the Square Dance Hall of Fame. He was a lifetime member of the North Texas Callers Association.

From his initial recording contract with Intro Records, to his own J-Bar-L label, Joe was responsible for some of the finest innovative square dance records of modern square dancing.

Joe passed away December 11, 1992. Here is a portion of the eulogy delivered at his funeral: "Joe Lewis will be missed by tens of thousands of his fans; those who perhaps did not know him personally but were enraptured by his musical and square dance calling skills. Joe Lewis will be missed by his fellow callers, for his acknowledged mastery of his profession and for his help, and willingness to share his trade secrets. He will be missed by his friends, for all the joy, warmth, and friendship he bestowed."