

Milestone Award - 1985

Jon Jones

Presented By Chris Guest

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Mr. Chairman, Board of Governors and CALLERLAB members and my friends -- I thank you for this opportunity to be with you at this convention and for the honor of making this presentation to someone whom I so much admire. This gentleman of whom I speak has been a recognized leader in the Square Dance Activity for approximately 25 years. He has excelled in a multi-faceted role within our activity as caller, leader, teacher of callers and has provided firm leadership and direction to this CALLERLAB organization.

His reputation as a determined crusader for the betterment of Square Dancing is known throughout the continental United States and all other international countries in which a Square Dance program exists.

There is an old saying that if you want a job done, assign it to a man who is too busy because a busy man will always get the job done. That phrase accurately reflects the character of our honoree. In addition to the awards and recognition he has received in the Square Dance World, he has been the recipient of frequent awards for work and leadership performed in his vocation.

Born in Jayton, Texas, in the mid 1930's, our leader-to-be moved with his parents to Mississippi where they resided for several years before moving back to his beloved Texas. His first introduction to Square Dancing was a 5th grade dance program taught by his school teacher Mother. Some of the big and complicated calls which he mastered in this early beginning were Picking Up Paw Paws, New Boy In Town, and, in his senior year in Godley, Texas, he met and started dating the girl who was later to become his square dance partner and wife. The year was 1953, and at the time of their dating, coincidentally, the popular song of the time was "The Whole Town Is Talking About the Jones Boy".

After high school and still during his courtship period with his wife-to-be, our honoree attended Hardin Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. His talent for music was enhanced as he played drums for the then famous Hardin Simmons Cowboy Band. Married in 1954, the couple moved to Arlington, Texas where he was employed in the City Engineering Department.

Jon and Shirley got their first taste of dancing together as a part of a demonstration team for the Centennial Celebration of Johnson County. Their first official introduction to lessons was in 1956 when they graduated after a grand total of six lessons. Their caller/teacher at that time was Joe Hines. Shortly after graduation, Jon announced to his wife, Shirley, that he was going to become a caller and proceeded to gather square dance records and information that was available at that time. He purchased his first record player (Hilton 300A) from Sears Roebuck and with electronic genius wired a couple of speakers into it which became his first sound system. His first guest tip as a caller was in 1956 at the "Swing Stars" club in Irving, TX. The club caller at that time was Bob Wilson. As a result of a guest calling tip in 1957, he was asked by Ross Carney to become the square dance teacher for General Dynamics Recreation in Ft. Worth. He continued to call and teach for this organization until 1960. Although square dancing was occupying the major part of his non-vocation time, he was finding enough time to attend to business at home

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which is evident by the birth of his 3 children, Vernon, 1957, James, 1960, and a daughter, Julie in 1964 and as he grew in his leadership role in our Square Dance Activity, he grew in his chosen profession as well. He became the building official for the City of Arlington for 7 years and was later promoted to Street Superintendent of the same city — a position that he still holds and has held for the last 10 years.

Highlights of his profession vocation include the following:

1. An active member of American Public Works Association (APWA) since 1972.
2. Elected to the Executive Committee of the Texas Chapter of that association in 1975.
3. Served as President of that same chapter in 1979 and was awarded the Texas chapter APWA Service Award in 1982 in recognition of his dedicated service.

Digressing a bit to his square dance activity, Jon was instrumental in the origination of the Arlington Promenaders, a club for which he called and served for over 20 years. He performed duties at every leadership level for the North Texas Callers Association and on two separate occasions was elected to lead that organization as their president.

His well-rounded career as a Square Dance caller and leader is well-documented by his travels throughout the world. He has been a staff member for numerous weekends and caller-college seminars. One of his early square dance engagements was with Manning and Nita Smith at Banff Institute in Alberta, Canada. In gathering background information, a story was given to me which I would like to share with you at this time:

When he was traveling with a group of Canadian callers, Jon really worked to be on his toes and everyone knew he liked to play the guitar. When Jon did this at after parties, he sat on a stool. Lee Helsel, always a prankster, kept a rubber chicken and at one after party put this chicken in Jon's guitar case. Jon was on stage, got out his stool and guitar case, prepared to perform. Imagine his surprise when he opened the case and he found the chicken! ! !

He has also been a contributor in the record field having recorded initially for Square "L" Records and for the last several years for Kalox Records. One of the truly gratifying moments of his life was when he recently recorded a duet with his now square dance caller son, Vernon.

He was instrumental in the organization of the Texas State Callers Association and was their first elected president. The more meaningful contributions to the Square Dance Activity have probably come through his firm leadership that has been demonstrated in this CALLERLAB organization for whom he has served as a Board member since 1976 and so ably served as Board Chairman in 1979 thru '81. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Board of Governors and membership of CALLERLAB, I am pleased and proud to present the Milestone Award to Jon Jones, my friend from Arlington, Texas.