



Les Gotcher
Milestone, 1975

Few contemporary callers have left their mark so indelibly engraved in the shaping of today's square dance picture than has Les Gotcher. Les, who today lives in Hilo, Hawaii, had his baptism in square dance calling in 1916 at the tender age of eleven, for which he received the princely sum of twenty-five cents.

As one of the nation's most colorful callers, Les moved to Hollywood from South Central Texas and became associated with the motion picture industry, calling for a number of Hollywood films including "Night Train to Memphis" in 1939, followed closely by "Square Dance Jubilee", two John Wayne classics, "Copper Canyon", "House by the River", "East Side West Side", "The Duchess of Idaho", and others.

One of the first to visualize the possibilities of the challenges of square dancing, Les "surprised" the square dance world by combining the basics or "hashing the breaks", a forerunner of much of the sight calling and position dancing of today.

His innovations soon received nationwide attention and Les became one of the foremost traveling callers in North America. Few contemporary callers have a record that can surpass Gotcher's miles-traveled-per-year in doing one-night stands, callers clinics, and workshops. As editor of "Squares 'n Rounds" square dance magazine and as author of many texts on calling, Les became a model for countless young callers coming into the activity.

Among the first to record, Les' records on Capital and MacGregor labels are still models of excellence. His own Black Mountain label poured dozens of patter call discs into the activity during the 1950s and '60s. Les is a member of the Square Dance Hall of Fame.

Now semi-retired he still finds the time and energy to do some calling and teaching and to write his autobiography, "Dancing Among the Stars." His wife, Winnie, of more than sixty years, passed away and in 1993 Les married his long time square dance friend, "Sunshine".

Les passed away on June 2, 1996, in Hilo, Hawaii.