



MIKE JACOBS

MILESTONE 2013

Mike was primarily known for calling one of the aspects of the square dance activity. He was, however, active in many different parts of the endeavor. The specialty for which Mike was known is only a part of the entire picture.

He was born in Kentucky, and started square dancing at age ten. He started calling as a teen, and set a goal of becoming a full-time caller. He achieved that goal, calling extensively throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, and Scandinavia. He has called all programs, including Basic and C-4.

In addition to his interest in square dancing, Mike was a complex person with many interests. In high school, he played catcher on the baseball team and always maintained an interest in all aspects of baseball. He also was interested in musical theater and performed in his college production of "The Fantasticks". Other interests included trivia, reading, old movies, and cooking. Our recipient was on the debate team in both high school and college. The debating skills he learned there allowed him to argue a point strongly without taking the discussion personally.

In square dancing, he was mentored in his early career by **Ray Bohn** and **Stew Shacklette**. As his calling career continued, he started to mentor new callers and became a CALLERLAB Accredited Caller-Coach. He enjoyed following the career of callers he mentored, and maintained an interest in their development.

In 1998, USDA hosted a meeting to start the idea of the various national square dance organizations working together to promote the activity. The idea that a coalition of the major national square, round and contra dance groups would enable pooling of resources to better promote our dance activity was not necessarily totally popular with the various organizations. Mike took over the job of representing CALLERLAB, and was instrumental in bringing it to fruition. **Jim Maczko** stated that it was Mike who made the rest of us realize that it was important enough to come together.

Mike, acting as Chairman and using his diplomacy, helped representatives begin to communicate, work together, and focus on their common interests instead of their differences. Groups represented were: CALLERLAB; American Callers Association (ACA); Contralab; International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs (IAGSDC); National Square Dance Campers Association (NSDCA); National Square Dance Convention Executive Committee (NEC); ROUNDALAB; Single Square Dancers USA (SSDUSA); United Square Dancers of America (USDA); and USA West Square Dance Convention Policy Board (USA West).

The group continued to meet two to three times a year, with different groups hosting and serving as rotating Chairs. **Mike Jacobs** provided a major leading role in organizing the group now known as the Alliance of Round, Traditional and Square Dance, Inc. (ARTS Dance).