

2004 Caller / Cuer Hall of Fame

Gary Mahnken of Corder, Missouri completed his 39th year of square dance calling in March 2004. He called singing calls after his second lesson and began calling after only six months of dancing. He currently calls regularly for two mainstream clubs and for his own plus and advanced level club. He regularly calls for different clubs throughout the state of Missouri.



Each fall Gary teaches lessons in the Kansas City area for mainstream, plus, and advanced levels and in his hometown for mainstream and plus levels.

Gary continues to be a popular guest caller in Missouri, Illinois and Kansas. He calls for exhibitions at rest homes in Higginsville, Missouri and the surrounding area and for many community events that are held annually. From 1988 to 2002 he called the Western Party for the annual convention of the American Academy of Family Physicians at crown Center in Kansas City, Missouri where they had as many as 1,500 student and resident doctors on the dance floor at one time.

Gary has attended and called at all the Missouri State Festivals from 1965 through the early 70s. He has called at nearly all the festivals since the 70s and was featured caller at the State Festival in 1986. He has called at many District dances in different areas of the state.

Gary was program chairman for the State Festival held in October 2002. He and Margy encourage their club's participation at State Festivals and many dancers accompany them each year.

Gary has been an active member of Caller Lab for a number of years. He has served on different committees of this organization such as the Advance Dancing Committee and the RPM committee.

Gary has spent time working with new callers and having some of the lessons in his home. He has also spent time working with youth. At one time he had a youth group of four squares in Higginsville called the "Yackin' Teens" who danced for a number of years with the Spinnin' Wheels. He has also worked with FFA students in school, the children in a parochial school for physical education and the local AFS (American Foreign Students) group in a high school. Recently he introduced square dancing to a group of international students attending CMSU.

The last few years he has worked with third grade students in Higginsville When the National Square Dance Convention was held in Kansas City, Missouri in 1975 Gary and Margy served on an educational committee. They have also attended and called at many National Conventions.

The Mahnkens are devoted to square dancing and do whatever they can do to promote the activity. They like to wear the traditional square dance attire when going places after dancing to help promote square dancing.

Margy retired in 1996 from the Lafayette County School as secretary and bookkeeper. She keeps Gary's schedules in order, helps with lessons, travels with him and attends all the dances.

Gary loves to sing and call dances and he is genuinely committed to square dancing and promotes the activity at every opportunity. His enthusiasm reflects the enjoyment, fulfillment, and pride he receives working with dancers. He is very devoted to making his clubs very successful and tries very hard to help his dancers achieve the status of being very good dancers. Gary is truly deserving of this award and the Missouri Federation of Square and Round Dance Clubs is proud to name Gary Mahnken as the Caller/Cuer Hall of Fame inductee for 2004.