

Silver Dollar Squares

The Silver Dollar Squares dance club was formed in the early fifties as a split from the Crosstrailers Square Dance Club. The club was started by Tom & Dorothy Gatewood and a group of friends within the first year of the Crosstrailers. The first dances were held at the Gladstone Hall in Northeast Kansas City. The club danced at several locations throughout the years, including Ark-N-Taw barn, and currently dance at the Little Blue Barn. The Silver Dollars have always danced on a wood floor, except for a year and a half after Ark-N-Taw barn closed. The Silver Dollars are well over 60 years young, second to Crosstrailers, in the Kansas City Area.

According to "legend" the club name was selected after the tossing of a silver dollar in Tom Gatewood's kitchen. The name and badge have drawn attention and recognition thru the years, and has provided a sense of pride for those wearing the symbol, a real Silver Dollar. Most club outfits & jackets have been black & white to accent the badge.

The Silver Dollars were formed because of a desire of the charter members to provide an atmosphere of family, with fun and dancing. That standard has been maintained for over 60 years, as many families have grown up with the club and have remained loyal in some way to the club. The Silver Dollars, at one time had a full square of cousins and three siblings & spouses as members. The club was always a couples club until 1987, when changes were adopted, due to the death of members, to protect the membership of the spouse. Couples and singles have been welcomed to the club ever since. Silver Dollars have always welcomed youth.

In the early years, Silver Dollars had 64 couples. There was no such thing as visitation, as this was well before callers used the same calls. It was hard to dance to other callers until Caller-Lab came along. Club rules were different in the early years: If you missed 3 dances in a row you had to go back & take lessons, square dance attire was required or you weren't admitted, any visitor had to be personally sponsored by a member to be at the dance, to attend class or become a member required personal sponsorship of a member. For many years, the Silver Dollars averaged 32 couples in membership. They danced for several years before joining the Heart of America Square Dance Association after it was formed. The club has a long association of friends and has always prided themselves as ethical, modest, fun dancers & good visitors.

Through the years, the Silver Dollars have conducted lessons, large & small, danced in the dirt at Lake Jacomo, floated down the river, gone on spring campouts, danced at festivals, been in parades, attended dance weekends (in & out of state), helped host the Kansas City 24th National Square Dance Convention, performed exhibitions at nursing homes, hosted a New Year's Eve dance in 14 inches of snow and pulled the cars uphill afterwards, suffered the deaths of dear members, contributed to charities, purchased enough heaters for the barn, when the furnace was off so not to cancel the dance, rally to those in need & many other things, all of which are a part of what makes the Silver Dollar family!

The Silver Dollars have contributed a great deal to square dancing in Kansas City. Some current and past callers have come thru the ranks of the Silver Dollars: Gene Miller started dancing with the club in 1958 and became the club's caller fulltime after the retirement of Tom Gatewood in 1975, Paul Dixon, Carl Smith, Bob Hocking, Bill Grove, Brownie Brown, Ron Stowell, Ralph Morast, Jim McAlpin, Jerry Farmer, Clayton Valentine, Steve Anderson, Steve Hackman, Don Whiteman (rounds) & Janet Hicks (lines). All these people proudly share part in the Silver Dollar history.

The Silver Dollars have always been a caller run club with option of a board. For many years a board served the club, but in recent years, Silver Dollars have been caller run. The club has had only two callers: Tom Gatewood & Gene Miller, in its long history! Gene has called with the club 41 years & was HO A Caller of the year 2006. We call this our history, but it seems more like a legacy to square dancing as we look back with much, much more to tell! Note: We can honestly say "Our badges have grown more valuable with age".