

2017 Caller / Cuer Hall of Fame

Gene Wilson started his dancing career in 1970 when he took lessons with the Levies and Lace Square Dance Club in Des Moines, Iowa. He and Martha danced with this club for two years before he got the itch to become a caller. In 1972, he took up with caller Jim Logan and other callers, who mentored him through many adventures. It was soon noticed that Gene liked to show-off. It wasn't long before Gene attended a Caller's School. After becoming a licensed caller, he became the club caller for the Wagon Wheelers. For many years, Gene taught square dancing in schools in and around Des Moines. He also conducted classes in his oversized garage (Hot or cold) when no other location could be found to conduct the lessons. He supported the clubs in and around Des Moines with demonstrations, parades, and many other square dance activities in the area and called at the Iowa State Square Dance Festival each year. There were times that his 4 year old granddaughter would join him in calling "Joy to the World." He assisted several younger dancers in their successful quest to become square dance callers mentoring them as they progressed.



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In 1994, He and Martha moved to Camdenton, Missouri and became the club caller for the Jeans and Queens. He was willing to do anything to promote square dancing there and throughout central Missouri. He is totally unselfish in his quest to increase square dancing in Missouri. He has called at events sponsored by other organizations wishing to have square dancing in their event and called at several fund raisers to support square dancers and non-square dancers alike. He recently called at a benefit dance for a cancer victim raising over \$8,000.00 for the family. He has successfully taught lessons for the Jeans and Queens, and several other clubs including the Ozark Whirlers, Capital City Squares and Millstone Wheelers for many years. He has called at the State Festival, demonstration dances, private dances, parades, the Dogwood Festival and many other activities that support the Central District and the State Federation. He does whatever it takes to promote square dancing wherever he travels.

For the past 11 years, he has supported the Missouri Federation's Youth Committee by calling at the MOAHPERD (Missouri Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance) convention and workshops teaching physical education teachers how to teach square dancing in schools throughout Missouri using the Missouri Federation of Square 'n Round Dance Clubs, Inc. Curriculum Guide. He has received much praise from that organization. He has always received an outstanding rating from the MOAHPERD attendees and staff. He has often made constructive suggestions and taken action on ways to promote square dancing in schools, and to youth organizations throughout the State.

Gene has always supported the Federation by calling at the Missouri State Square Dance Festivals and has called at the Central District Dances each year when district callers were used for the dances. He supports any Federation club in promoting square dancing and is willing and excited to travel great distances to provide the support needed for whatever square dance function he has been asked to support. He recently graduated a class in Lebanon as a result of a recruiting effort that started at the State Festival in 2014.

It is our belief that **Gene Wilson** solidly deserves the award of Missouri Federation of Square 'N Round Dance Clubs, Inc. award "Caller of the Year."