



Vaughn Parrish Milestone 2002

The Parrishes, Vaughn and Jean, began their square dancing in 1947. Vaughn's parents had just returned to the Parrish home in Childers County, Texas, having attended Lloyd Shaw's 1947 summer callers institute in Colorado Springs. Enthusiastic, the elder Parrishes showed them how to do the Varsouviana (Put Your Little Foot), the Virginia Reel and other dances they had picked up. After having learned from his parents, they managed to get a group of neighbors together and Vaughn started teaching. That was his first class, simultaneously, both as a dancer and as a caller. The time was October 1947. He was dancing with the Do Si Do Club in Childers County where almost everyone in the club did a bit of the calling.

Moving from Texas to Colorado in 1950, and setting up a farm just east of Greeley, square dancing took a back seat for a time. The Parrishes moved up to the mountains in the early 1950's and Vaughn began his teaching and calling in earnest, starting a club in Boulder in 1955. About that time he was hired by the University of Colorado and the Mountain Recreation Department to teach square dance classes two nights a week. These sessions would run from 50 to 75 squares in an evening. This he did for about ten years, continuing the classes through the summer. As Vaughn's popularity increased, he began to receive requests for calling engagements and did his first square dance tour in 1956. And from that point, traveling took up a good deal of his time.

The Parrishes started their family ranch in 1958. Vaughn built his own square dance hall and began teaching classes at the ranch on a regular basis. As time went on he attracted dancers from all over the United States and some foreign countries. Not only did he show them the joys of square dancing, but he treated them as a family, fed them well, took them on tours of the countryside around his hall, and sent them home as happy campers and square dancers.

Vaughn spent many hours helping newer callers on a one-on-one basis. He played an active role in his local caller's association and was always a leader in working for purposeful activities and results that would benefit all members. He has made his hall available for all sorts of activities without remuneration. His focus has always been on what is good for square dancing.

Vaughn was one of the first to become a CALLERLAB Accredited Caller Coach, and now has emeritus status. Working with other leaders he was on the staff of the callers school in Keene, New Hampshire until the mid-1970's. Vaughn's largest callers school was held in Australia in 1975. In 1980 and '83 he taught 36 callers (mostly women) in Taipei, Taiwan.

He recorded many square dance songs on Blue Star, Kalox, Square Tunes, and on his own label, Ten Plus One. He has also recorded round dances on Delco and Blue Star, and composed between 25 and 30 round dances. The most popular being "Shenandoah Waltz".

Starting in 1964 with a calling trip to Alaska, Vaughn made several trips to military bases with calling visits to Germany, England, France, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Greece, Australia and Japan. He taught a class lasting three weeks in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Among many awards was his induction into the Northeast Colorado Square Dance Hall of Fame. In addition to receiving the Milestone he has been honored with a number of certificates awarded by the CALLERLAB Board of Governors.

In recognizing Vaughn Parrish we salute a career of more than 50 years of dedicated service to square dancing.