



## **Jack Murtha Milestone 2001**

**H**aving received a Doctorate that led to a career in recreation Jack was involved in square dancing since college – almost half a century. He introduced the activity to many thousands of men and women, boys and girls in the northern part of California.

Over the years Jack and his wife, Thelma's, lives have been so filled with teaching square dancing and calling for square dance clubs that Jack searched for ways to extend his personal ability to reach out to more people and came up with a plan he called the Diamond System. This through a series of records and written instructions made it possible for other callers and dancers to enjoy the hobby in a well constituted method. This system, today, is in use in many places around the world.

In working with school children in his area for many years he helped to insure the future of the activity for coming generations. In April of 1999 he produced a second-grade square dance jamboree that attracted 500 youngsters. The following month another 500 second graders attended a second grade jamboree. It was not unusual to find some of these youngsters whose parents took part in a similar 2nd grade jamboree some twenty-five years earlier.

**Jack attended all the CALLERLAB Conventions and over the years he served on a number of important committees and was chairman of several. He received the Chairman's Recognition Award for his dedicated service to the organization and to the square dance activity.**

**For many years Jack has maintained an archives of square dancing recording the backgrounds and experiences of many of the activities leaders.**

**On several occasions and at a time when this country and the country of China were experiencing diplomatic problems, Jack and Thelma flew to that country and taught their dance leaders to dance, teach and call American square dances. The Murthas played a major role in bringing a group of the China dance leaders to America where they attended the CALLERLAB Convention in Los Angeles, Jack passed away in July 1999. Among the many expressions of grief was this from Tang Xialong, spokesman for the Chinese square dancers in Beijing:**

**For over ten years, Jack came to China for many times introducing the American square dance to the Chinese people, and as a result of his continuous efforts and great enthusiasm, the American square dance was planted and is now blooming in China.**

**He had organized activities and received Chinese square dance delegations visiting the U.S. so that many young Chinese young square dancers had the opportunities to experience and learn American square dance. His contribution to the exchange programs between the Chinese and American square dancers, to the friendship between the Chinese and American people will be forever recorded in the history book of the growth of square dance in China, and will never be forgotten by square dance lovers in China.**

**People who met Jack for over ten years were impressed by his warmth and sincerity towards friends, his strong sense of responsibility and his passion for life.**

**His death is a great loss for the American square dance, because we still cannot do it without the instruction and help of this particular teacher. Actually . . . his spirit will forever live in our hearts. Jack Murtha will live always in the heart of every Chinese square dancer.**