

Gold Card (Life Member) - 2009

John Kaltenthaler

Presented by Larry Davenport

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he Gold Card membership in CALLERLAB may be given in recognition of service to CALLERLAB. It may be presented to long term CALLERLAB Members who have provided outstanding service to CALLERLAB and been selected by representatives of the membership (the EC) to be honored in this way. The list of those who have been given this recognition is short. To date there have been only twelve Gold Card recipients. Two of those recipients are at this convention, Cal Golden and Jim Mayo. The other ten recipients are Bill Davis, Herb Egender, Lee Helsel, Arnie Kronenberger, Frank Lane, Martin Mallard, Bob Osgood, Bill Peters, Gloria Rios Roth, and Bob Van Antwerp.

I am very happy to have this opportunity to make this presentation this evening. I want to talk about an individual who has a very strong passion for our activity. That passion started with the classes he taught and the clubs he called for and went beyond that to encompass the activity as a whole and this organization in particular. He eats, sleeps, and breathes square dancing and CALLERLAB. He believes in the future of square dancing and in the role that CALLERLAB has played and can continue to play. He has spent a career doing everything within his power to work to strengthen the organization and help square dancing stay healthy and grow.

This individual spent time working for Uncle Sam in the Army. Later he joined IBM where he spent ten years. During that time he found the time to become a square dancer and a square dance caller. He has fifty plus years of calling and dancing. He has run very successful local and regional programs and has called and taught all over the U. S. and Canada and overseas. To give you a sense of his involvement in the activity I want to briefly touch on some of the activities and recognition this individual has received throughout his career in square dancing. He became a member of the European Callers and Teachers Association in 1963. He served as President, Training Director and Board Member through 1966. He and his wife have been members of the Overseas Dancer Association (OSDA) since 1966.

He served as General Chairman in 1970 and received the Nester Award in 1987. He has been a member of CALLERLAB since 1974 and was a charter member of Legacy. He received the Sets in Order American Square Dance Society Silver Spur Award in 1979. The following quote from the presentation of The Silver Spur award exemplifies his leadership role throughout his career: "With all the millions involved in Square Dancing today there are few, if any, who are more deeply committed to this activity than you. We have watched for more than a decade as you took on a leadership role among square dancers, square dance leaders and callers scattered throughout America and Europe. While stationed in Germany, when you were not calling and teaching yourself, you were busily involved in the training and directing of other callers in an area that was always in desperate need of caller leaders."

During CALLERLAB's second year when the future was uncertain and funding for the future was even less certain, he resigned from his job at IBM to accept full time employment as the organization's Executive Secretary. He was the first (and for 15 years, the only) full time executive employee. Throughout most of the first decade of his employment with CALLERLAB it was not clear that the organization would be able to continue paying the Executive Secretary. On several occasions during his tenure, including his final year on the job, CALLERLAB's financial obligations were met only because he deferred paying his own salary. That exemplifies how huge his commitment to this organization is.

A professional association of square dance callers was an uncharted field in the world of square dancing. CALLERLAB was a young organization and without precedence when he took the position of Executive Secretary. CALLERLAB was a tremendous idea for the improvement of modern square dancing and the groundwork was laid by many great callers and leaders, but its success was not guaranteed.

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The job of Executive Secretary could not be seen as secure full time employment that could compete with the security of the corporate world that an IBM represented. But the job could offer to someone like John the opportunity to work to improve the activity he loved, and he took the financial risk to realize that opportunity. No one could clearly identify the job. No one could guarantee even the first year's salary. John created the job as he did it. Few people believed in the idea and hope of CALLERLAB with any more passion than John. John put his heart and soul into the job and into the organization.

John brought many important qualities to the fledgling organization. He was diligent, intelligent, a super salesman, enthusiastic, meticulous, totally honest, and an experienced, skillful caller. CALLERLAB drew on all of these qualities to become the respected representative of square dancing's professional leadership. Most of all John was creative in solving the problems that inevitably face an organization crossing uncharted fields. John's contributions to the negotiations with BMI/ASCAP in the uncharted field of music licenses helped to ensure that the activity maintained viability, free from a financial burden it could not afford. John was instrumental in ensuring the success of the first Mini CALLERLAB Convention in Australia John has done a superlative job in organizing high quality CALLERLAB - sponsored seminars at the annual National Square Dance Conventions.

These are just some of the significant accomplishments during his Executive Secretary tenure. John served CALLERLAB as the Executive Secretary from 1976 to 1991. He received the Chairman's Award in 1985.

John has continued to serve CALLERLAB. After retirement as Executive Secretary he served on the Board of Governors from 1992 to 2003. He has served on numerous CALLERLAB committees and recently retired from the Chair of the Caller Training Committee. John has long been dedicated to caller training and was one of the first accredited Caller Coaches in 1986.

He has continued to work tirelessly for the Caller Coach Accreditation program. CALLERLAB is a first-rate, professional operation that is a tribute to John's tireless efforts to pay attention to the details that ensure success. John received a very well deserved Milestone Award in 1998.

The CALLERLAB standards of operation stand as a testimony to John's leadership throughout his years of serving as Executive Secretary. We have heard many times in the hallway at many conventions people referring to John as CALLERLAB. John is still always highly visible at conventions. He is always ready to help. Kathy and I have known John and Freddie Kaltenthaler for 26 years. We met them in 1982 when we were invited by friends to go square dancing and found ourselves at the first night of a Pocono Squares square dance class taught by John. It was clear from the start that John was passionate about square dancing. He was also passionate about CALLERLAB and we were taught CALLERLAB at the same time we were taught square dancing. His enthusiasm carried over to us and square dancing and CALLERLAB became part of our lives. John and Freddie represent a great partnership. I have to say that we would have expected great things from John anyway but I am not sure I would be up here tonight without the partnership and support that Freddie has provided. They have been great inspirations to both Kathy and me.

John has provided a lasting legacy to CALLERLAB:

No Badge, No Food, No Exceptions!

It is my very great pleasure to present the Gold Card to John Kaltenthaler.