

Lifetime Achievement Award – Jim Mayo

I look around this room today and see the future of our activity. Leaders, trailblazers, teachers. Local callers, regional callers, international callers. As I look around, I also see that we don't seem to have very many of "legend" callers left who have been around the activity long enough to have seen and participated in CALLERLAB since before it's inception to now. And the number of callers who have remained involved with continuous active service to our organization are fewer still. Today, I have the honor and privilege of awarding a LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD to one of these legends. I am sure that it won't take long before you figure out who, but indulge me for a few minutes as I briefly tell their story.

Our recipient started dancing in 1947 and started calling in 1949 with the traditional New England style of dancing. During the 1950's, he made the transition to our current form of dancing with its contemporary figures and styling.

He started teaching callers in 1959. In 1966 wrote a book entitled "Calling For Modern Square Dancing." In 1972 he started writing a series of booklets on various aspects of our trade. The first was called "Timing" then "Leadership and Club Administration" followed in 1974 by "Your Voice" and in 1977 by "Smoothness in Square Dancing." Many of these articles are still used in our CALLERLAB training curriculum today.

He helped found the Tri-State Callers Association and the New England Council of Callers Association, two organizations are still in existence today, serving in just about every office available.

He became a Charter member of CALLERLAB. He was our first Chairman in 1975 and has served on the Board of Governors ever since. He served for many years on our Executive Committee and was chairman several additional times during his tenure on the board. He was inducted into the Sets in Order Hall of Fame in 1979. In 1992 he and his wife were inducted into the Square Dance Foundation of New England's Hall of Fame, and in 1993 they received the New England Yankee Clipper award. He received the CALLERLAB Milestone Award in 1984, and a Gold Card in 2006. In fact, I believe that he and his bride have received just about every award that the activity can bestow upon them, both in New England and around the world.

Figured it out yet?

Back when I started calling, this caller seemed like a hard nut to crack to me. Reserved, observant, unreadable – but me being me, I was determined to work hard to earn both his and his wife's respect. I remember one snowy afternoon at the Mill-A-Round we were looking out the window wondering if any dancers would show up for a dance, and he quietly said something to the effect of "if you ever need anything, know that I am available to you." I felt like I finally belonged. It made me work harder to do my best to live up to their expectations of me. I would not be here today, in part, without the support, guidance, and friendship I have

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received from Jim and JoAnn Mayo. I know, even today, that if I approached him with a question or for guidance, he would answer honestly and directly with the activity's, and my, best interest at heart. Others have said it better than I:

From John Wedge: "Jim Mayo is an amazing man. At his current age, he is still the one person I would go to for information about modern western square dancing. No matter what is asked of him, Jim is always there to help. JoAnn is his backbone. She is the most amazing and generous hostess that I have ever encountered."

From Ted Lizotte: "The most important interaction I had as a young caller was with Jim. He saw something in me that I didn't see, and made me aware of it. His willingness to help, honest feedback, and unwavering support for what he believed I could achieve, put me on the path to be the caller I am today. I'm forever grateful that he took the time to take a young kid and point him in the right direction."

From Jerry Junck: "Jim and JoAnn Mayo have been tireless in their support of square dancing and CALLERLAB. Jim has left a legacy of the history of square dancing through his writings, and his historical perspective of CALLERLAB is without equal. He and JoAnn are the definition of a friend to me."

From Masaru Wada: "His book is a very important book for square dance society to understand American history and culture. Japanese square dance history was stated in this book. This is contributed to know Japanese square dance society as well. I respect him that he has lots of activity for CALLERLAB association and development into the square dance society."

From Don Beck: "I'm so lucky that Jim and I lived in the same area. Jim was my mentor. In my early days of calling, I learned so much from him. In my later days of calling, I learned so much from being able to brainstorm with him. I also value his and JoAnn's friendship "

And from Don's milestone presentation to Jim: "He is willing to keep changing when changes will be beneficial yet will strongly stick by his decisions when that seems to be best. Jim is an innovator, not a renegade."

And from Tony O: "It would be very difficult for me to put what Jim and JoAnn Mayo have meant to me in just a few sentences. Jim was and in many ways still is a mentor. Jim was always the first one I came to for advice when I was Chairman of the Board. I was honored to serve several terms on the BOG and the EC with Jim, and I cannot think of a more dedicated couple to the CALLERLAB organization than the two of them. Jim's unselfish dedication to CALLERLAB is unparalleled, and if there ever was a couple who bled CALLERLAB blue, it would be the Mayos."

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You have called with them, laughed with them, cried with them, gotten mad at them, argued with them, learned from them. We consider ourselves lucky to be able to call them friends.

On behalf of CALLERLAB, it is with great honor that I award this Lifetime Achievement Award to Jim Mayo, and equally recognize with great love and appreciation his wife, JoAnn Mayo.