

I'm Happy to See You Here Because

Square Dancing is Friendship Set to Music

Lynn Nelson - Biography

I have lived in Kansas City since 1988 when my husband was transferred with the Santa Fe Railroad. We are originally from Peoria, IL. Finding ourselves in a new city with no friends or family nearby, we decided we needed a recreational activity that we could enjoy together, would be affordable, and would allow us to meet others in the area. Square dancing seemed to be the perfect solution. We took lessons with the Swangers Square Dance Club in 1989 and subsequently served as the Federation Delegate, Vice President and President of the club.



We also served the Heart of America Federation as Co-Editor and Editor for 5 years. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet and dance with people across a two state area.

In June of 1996, I decided that I would enjoy being a caller. I started by attending Kaw Valley Caller School, instructed by Dana Schirmer in Topeka, Kansas, and working with a group of dancers weekly. They were a big help in improving my calling skills. In July of 1997, I attended the Heart of America Callers School, instructed by Tony Oxendine and Jerry Junck and held in Kansas City. In September 1997, I attended the Golden Triangle Square Dance Caller College held in Woodville, Texas, by Wayne Morvent and Wade Driver. In 2000, 2004 and 2010 I again went back to the Heart of America Callers School to work with Jerry Junck, Paul Henze and Tim Marriner to try to refine some of my skills. There's always more to learn and I wonder if I will ever be able to put it all to use.

I have been the Club Caller for the B-N-R Squares since May '97 and am very pleased with the support I have received from the members and area dancers. In 1999 I was asked to be the club caller for the Mustangs Square Dance Club in Overland Park, Kansas. The Mustangs were so supportive and a joy to call for. Some of them have become more like family than friends, as have the B-N-R Squares. Another example of how Square Dancing is Friendship Set To Music. Sadly, due to health challenges, the Mustangs were forced to close the club in May 2011. Special thanks to all of them for the friendship and support through that 12 years.

On May 23, 1999, we lost Jerry following open heart surgery. It was quite a blow to all of us and square dancing became my salvation. I found myself out either calling, dancing or teaching 5 or 6 nights a week. I immersed myself in an activity that I loved in order to dull the pain of my loss. I've always said that Square Dancing is the best stress reliever I've ever found, and this chapter in my life confirmed that. The friendship, comfort and support I found among other square dancers is unequalled by anything else in my life.

Jerry and I have 2 children. Our son Tim is the father of our grandchild, Tim Jr., better known as TJ, who gave me a great grandson, Jaxxon, in January 2012. Our daughter Cindi married her soul mate in May 2013. Both of our children have square danced in the past but have moved on to other interests. While I can't get them to a square dance any

more, TJ took lessons in 2000, graduating just before his 8th birthday and went along occasionally until he was out of his teens. He was always surprised by how much fun he had since he's far from a little boy anymore. Sometimes he danced with others more than he danced with me, but it made me so proud to watch him dance. After all, youth are the future of our activity.

Since becoming a caller, I have become active in several Callers' organizations including, CALLERLAB; KAMO Callers, Cuers and Partners; NE KS Callers and KS State Callers. I have served as an officer in several positions in both NE KS Callers and KAMO Callers. In 2008, I served on 3 committees for the 57th National Square Dance Convention in Wichita, KS and in 2018, I was the Vice Chairman of Programming for the 68th National Square Dance Convention in Kansas City. This position made me responsible for scheduling all of the callers in every dance hall. It was a great opportunity to not only work closely with a fellow caller and become very good friends, but also to get to know callers from not only all over this country but from other areas of the world. I feel that when you get as much from an activity as I do, it's only right to try to give back. It seems that active participation only makes it better.

In the spring of 2014, I was honored to be named Co-Caller of the Year and inducted into the Heart of America Federation's Caller/Cuer Hall of Fame. This is an honor I never expected and one I am so grateful for. Even more of a surprise was my induction into the MO State Caller/Cuer Hall of Fame in the fall of 2018. Much to the surprise of everyone who knew me, I was stunned and completely speechless. I never dreamed I would be included in such an elite group. It certainly puts me in very good company. I am very grateful for the recognition of all the things I do in square dancing. It's pretty special to be honored just for doing what you love.

In the years since I began calling, I have traveled all over the states of Kansas and Missouri, up into Nebraska, Iowa, down to Arkansas and Texas, in Illinois and even out to Wyoming to call and have danced in several other states, as well. In 2015 I began teaching lessons in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas and was able to call a dance there, as well as continuing lessons in 2016. As of 2017, I have a full program of lessons and a weekly dance, as well as a couple of special dances. I have also called at several national conventions. This is an opportunity that I am so grateful for. I have met many wonderful people across the miles and look forward to meeting so many more. Always remember there are no strangers in Square Dancing, only friends you haven't met yet. When you step into a square, be sure to introduce yourself to the others there. Who knows, maybe it will be me. I'm liable to turn up anywhere. I love to dance as much as I love to call. I look forward to meeting YOU in a square.

Special thanks to Dan Wheeler, who maintains this site for me. Dan's help is greatly appreciated. He's a good friend, not only to me, but to all of Square Dancing. Be sure to find the link to his main page and stop by and take a look at all the wonderful things he does. Thanks Dan, and many yellow rocks.