

BILL CRAWFORD
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

The form nominating Bill Crawford for the Hall of Fame started out simply stating “Bill has spent many long hours promoting square and round dancing. He is dedicated to the fun and fellowship of this heart filled activity.” Hidden behind that modest praise are many years of dedication to the activity we love. Bill and his wife Virginia began square dancing in the spring of 1956 then started round dancing a year later. Within a few years, they were knee-deep in many aspects of the activity.

In late 1961 John Edgerton suggested that the Greater Memphis Square and Round Dance Association (GMS&RDA) begin a publication. Bill already had experience in the printing business beginning with a class at Memphis Tech High School in the early 30s, a job in 1938 with the (then) Memphis Press-Scimitar, and a job later with the Memphis Commercial Appeal. Bill offered his services and the first issue of the GMS&RDA publication “Listen to the Caller” (now known simply as “The Caller”) was produced in December 1961. Bill remained as editor until at least 1998. Through the years, the publication evolved from a mimeographed newsletter to a several page typeset publication.

Bill continued his promotion of square dancing by designing and distributing world-wide a square dance stamp beginning in the spring of 1965. He was editor of the “Tennessee Square Dancer”, the Tennessee State Association of Square and Round Dance Clubs, Inc. publication, for two years. He also gave his time to the State Association as publicity chairman for two state conventions held in Memphis (1978 and 1986). Nationally, he volunteered on the publicity committees for the 29th (Chairman) and 39th National Conventions held in Memphis. Bill attended 31 National Conventions and was a fixture at the press breakfasts. He was recognized there for being the longest running attendee. Many years he served as a panelist at National Conventions.

Most of all Bill was a promoter, but that wasn't all Bill did. In 1962, he and Virginia were elected President of the GMS&RDA. During their tenure as President, they began negotiations with the Chisca-Plaza Hotel for a benefit square dance. This ultimately became the Mid-South Square and Round Dance Festival. Bill & Virginia chaired the first festival in 1963. In addition to his service to the GMS&RDA, Bill served the Memphis Solos and Tennessee Twirlers as President.

At the national level, Bill chaired the 6th National Singles Convention in Memphis. He became a Legacy trustee at the initial meeting in 1973 and served on the 3rd Legacy meeting host committee in 1977 when Roundalab was formed.

As one of his nominees, Bill Sawtelle, stated in the nomination form in 1987, “Most of us would never find the time to give to square dancing that he [Bill Crawford] has spent.” Bill continued giving until his death May 24, 2002 in Memphis at the age of 84.

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