

# **Billy Joe Oliver**

Greenville, Tennessee.

Billy Joe Oliver's first dance experiences came in the 1950's. He began dancing with and leading traditional dances for the YOUNG FARMERS AND HOMEMAKERS CLUB of Greeneville, Tennessee. These were mostly folk dances, schottisches and traditional (Appalachian Style) square dancing. Billy Joe and his Mother, Willie, were familiar faces at the club meetings and dances in those days.

In early 1959 I was City Recreation Director in Greeneville and I hired Billy Joe to come and call a square dance for a large ballroom dance club I had inherited from the late Louis Calhoun. This dance led to the formation of the Greeneville Promenaders Square Dance Club which was very successful for some 30 years. Billy Joe reached out to the Knoxville Callers for some early help in learning to call the rapidly progressing western style of square dancing. He helped me establish the Promenaders club as we were both learning to call.

In the 1960s Billy Joe became the caller for the successful WEAVERS CLUB OF GREENEVILLE, and also branched out to form the CLOVERLEAF CLUB of Morristown. Both these clubs were very successful for many years and some of their members still dance.

In addition to calling for these two clubs, Billy Joe taught many classes and made many guest calling appearances at clubs, festivals and weekends in the upper east Tennessee area and surrounding areas. His clubs won several attendance awards at the various weekends in Gatlinburg. He also was a member of the Upper East Tennessee Caller's Association. He attended a number of state conventions.

Billy Joe, his wife Mary Elizabeth, his mother Willie, and his brother Don were all dancers and helped Billy Joe with his calling activities. Billy Joe also had two step sons.

Billy Joe was a life long farmer and enjoyed raising beef cattle. He worked several years at the Greene Valley Developmental Center providing special training and supervision for the mentally retarded residents there.

Billy Joe Oliver was well liked by everyone. He was not only a good square dance caller and leader but more importantly was a very solid and dependable Christian individual. He is missed by all his family, friends and associates in the square dance world. He truly belongs in the TENNESSEE SQUARE DANCE HALL OF FAME.

Respectfully submitted; 4-25-05

By Don Williamson, square dance caller and friend