

Walter Schnoor

Inducted January 27, 2006

Walter Schnoor arrived in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1958 to work as a VW mechanic. Unable to speak English, he rented an apartment at the YMCA in downtown Tulsa and began to learn the language by attending movies. He had seen versions of "from Here to Eternity" and "The Glenn Miller Story" dubbed in German while living in his hometown of Kiel. "The first words I learned," says Walter. "were 'forget it!' and 'coffee and donuts.'" Soon he had purchased an automobile and furthered his language studies by going to drive-in movies and making himself learn 20 words of English a day.

After a period of time, he rented a small apartment and the owner of the apartment said he should meet her niece. The blind date led to marriage to his wife of 40 plus years. Peggy. The Schnoors have three daughters Pat, Carrie, and Christi, as well as Walter's son, Rick. Walter and Peggy have four grandchildren Georg, Alan, Katie, and Samantha.

In 1964, Walter found soccer players practicing at Will Rogers High School and he began playing his favorite sport again. He had been selected as a professional player for the Hamburg SV team, but his father would not sign the necessary papers, and Walter became a mechanic instead. Walter's love of the game and organizational skills came to the front when he helped organize the Tulsa International Soccer Club in 1967 that provided the impetus for adult soccer in Tulsa. From the TISC group of international players came future youth coaches, referees, and administrators and the nucleus of Green Country Soccer and eventually Oklahoma Soccer Association.

One method of attracting Oklahomans to watch soccer was to sponsor exhibition matches and Walter helped organize two games against the Chicago Sting in 1980. A group of Oklahoma City all-stars played against the Sting in Moore, and the following week played a group of Tulsa all-stars in Tulsa.

Walter's playing skills led him to participate in the USSF Amateur Cup, the Dallas German American Club, and the GCSA Adult League. He also found time to referee both youth and adult matches during this time.

Walter decided that for soccer to grow in Oklahoma, it would need a goal such as acceptance as a varsity sport in high school and college. To that end, he began a kids league and coached young players. Walter encouraged adult coaches to form youth teams and coach in Green Country. By now, Walter owned his own VW shop and his business sense spilled over to the administration of the early years of Green Country. He began contacting his customers and promoting the idea of soccer at Tulsa University. With the

help of Getty Oil, Walter founded the TU soccer program and became its first coach. For several years, the team would pile in Walter's blue VW bus and tour the state playing matches. Soon, scholarships were being offered to play college soccer and get an education. Walter is most proud of his students who took advantage of their soccer skills to get a degree.

As the state's first head coach and one of its early players, Walter continues to support and enjoy the game he first played years ago in his native Germany. However, his little VW shop is no longer. Just as Oklahoma's soccer program has moved on, so has Walter. His German Motor shop now specializes Benz and is adorned with soccer memorabilia.