

Robert Reising

Inducted February 6, 2009

Robert Reising moved to Tulsa in 1971 along with wife, Sue; Daughter, Gretchen. Soccer was unfamiliar to the Louisville, Kentucky native but not to his associates at American Airlines. His computer skills and a degree from Centre College in Kentucky took him to New York where he met Tom Ladevaia and was hired to work on American's crew scheduling program. Moving to Tulsa, Robert and Tom shared an office at American. It's from that office that Tom Ladevaia first ordered soccer fields for the fledgling Green Country Soccer Association.

When Gretchen and Robert's son Robert III signed up to play soccer, dad was asked to assist with the team. "I flunked out of my college gym class." Says Reising, "so playing or coaching was not for me, but I wanted to help my children by learning the game, so I took the referee course." The instructor was Peter Aradi and soon Robert was officiating Green Country matches.

Reising's legacy, however, would not be as a referee but as an administrator. With less than a year of exposure to soccer, Reising was tapped for leadership. "Tom Ladevaia asked me to take over the job as state Youth Commissioner in 1978 and I agreed," says Reising. It was an office he held for two years. During that time, he worked with the regional tournaments as well as state tournaments. In the Spring of 1979, while attending the Annual General Meeting, Reising was elected Regional Commissioner for region III of the United Youth Soccer Association, the youth body of the United States Soccer Federation. "I was just getting into the office of State Commissioner and suddenly I was over a region comprising of eleven southern states." It was a post he held for six years until retiring in 1985. During that time, he would use his weeks of vacation time for soccer and spend three weekends a month on the road for soccer.

Robert was instrumental in bringing the regional offices to Tulsa. During his six years as regional chairman, United States Youth Soccer's regional headquarters were on 51st street in Tulsa.

"I had to give up the referee badge," said Reising, "because of time conflicts between administration and officiating." But he would not get away from referees that easily. "Marypat Bell approached me after my term with US Youth and asked me to run for Oklahoma Soccer Association's 1st Vice Presidency," says Reising. The office oversees appeals and disciplinary situations in OSA and no appeals of his committee's decisions were filed during his tenure. Robert held many hearings during his two years in the position. Robert is proud of that.

As one of the founders of OSA, Reising looks at soccer in Oklahoma today and is pleased with the fruits of his labor. "Look around and see all the soccer pitches," he says. "They are everywhere and when we began, we had to fight for space. But soccer will continue to grow because it is fun and that's why the kids love to play."

Grandchildren are the focus of the Reising family now. Robert III and son Joseph live in San Francisco while Gretchen and husband Michael live in New York with their son's Logan and Grant. All three grandsons have soccer balls.