

Anacletus "Gene" Queri

Inducted January 30, 2015

Gene was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania but grew up in Syracuse, New York. He left North High School in Syracuse in his senior year to sign up for the U.S. Air Force and spent 21 years in the service. During that time, he was assigned to a facility near Tokyo, Japan and it was there he met Janice, his wife of 51 years and married her in 1963. Gene is proud of his family of two daughters, Lisa Marie and Kelly Anne, and son Michael. And of course he is equally proud of his grandchildren:

Brandon, Bryce, Jennifer, Kellen, Ryan, and Sabrina.

During those Air Force years, Gene was stationed in numerous places and in 1977 he was assigned to Tinker Air Force Base in Midwest City; It was there he began his connection to the sport that he has grown to love - soccer. Seeing the need for coaches, Gene took the US Soccer F and E clinics and began coaching Michael's U8 team. It became apparent to Gene that the Midwest City club needed referees as well as coaches and he signed up for referee course. He officiated his first soccer match in 1978.

As with many volunteers during this time of Oklahoma Soccer Association's development, they were expected to wear many hats. Gene not only served as coach and referee, he also accepted the position of President of the Midwest City club. But his referee experiences were what appealed most to him and he was soon assigning referees and then appointed Area Referee Administrator for the club.

During this time courses were offered for instructors and assessors and upgrade clinics were held to promote referee to grades 7 and 6. In 1981 he became a USSF Referee instructor and taught a group of teenagers in the Oklahoma City area. One of the class members was his son, Michael. Gene's abilities allowed him to quickly attain the rank of State referee and by 1983 he was officiating matches in the professional matches held in Oklahoma City. He was an assistant referee at several OKC Slickers games with FIFA referee Bob Evans. In 1986, he was the Referee for both the high school finals and the Adult Division one final, called the Turnpike Cup, and had Hall of fame members Atef Iskander and Richard Brook as his assistants.

Work with the Federal Aviation Association as an air traffic controller pulled the Queri family to Washington, D.C. and for 24 years Gene taught controllers while becoming a commercial pilot with all ratings including flight and ground instructor. From his Air Force career to his FAA career and in between, teaching of some sort has been Gene's forte. He has always been able to impart to his students the information they need to do the job, whether it be Air traffic Control, teaching them to fly, or learn and understand the Laws of the Game in soccer.

Returning to the Oklahoma City area, it was not long before he was asked to return to instructing and assessing referees. Over the past decade and more, Gene has spent endless hours at Edmond Soccer club and Norman Youth Soccer club mentoring young refs and providing them with insight on how to officiate a soccer match. His experience and knowledge of the game allows him to explain the nuances of the art of refereeing to young referees and that is his legacy to the sport he so dearly loves.