

Juergen Gohlke

Inducted January 27, 2006

In 1945, a young Juergen Gohlke left his native Germany to immigrate to Oklahoma.

Arriving in Shawnee, where his sponsoring family lived, Juergen began familiarizing himself with not only a new family but also a new country and state. After graduating from Shawnee High School, Juergen began working for Shawnee Steel, a job he would hold until leaving the state in 1996 for Florida.

The state of soccer in the late 1950's and early 1960's in Oklahoma was one of pickup games in and around college towns and metropolitan areas. In Shawnee, Juergen found a group of college players from around the world playing his favorite sport of soccer. With the help of Father Paul Zahler, Juergen began forming teams to play at St. Gregory's (which in the early days was a high school and then a two-year college) and surrounding colleges and universities.

"Most of the soccer players I worked with," says Juergen, "were from private schools in the Tulsa and Oklahoma City areas as well as from New York and South America.

The local athletes at OBU (where he coached for several years) and St. Gregory's who had little soccer background loved the game, but we had to teach them how to play it. For most of them it was an unknown game ...

During the 1970s, Juergen would play, coach, and referee games all in the same weekend in the fledgling Oklahoma Soccer Football Association that would eventually become Frontier Country Soccer Association and Oklahoma Soccer Association. Because Juergen was so well organized, Father Paul asked him to become the secretary of the new association - Oklahoma Soccer Association. Juergen held the office for nine years during the tenure of Father Paul as president.

One of Juergen's significant contributions to Oklahoma Soccer was his writing of the organization's first constitution and bylaws to govern soccer development across the state.

In addition to the other duties, Juergen organized workshops for both referees and coaches in Oklahoma and continued to officiate until the early 1980's. Such interest in the sport was fueled by Juergen's dream to see Oklahoma become a leader in soccer. Nearly forty years later, Oklahoma Soccer Association is an example of his determination and leadership.