

Don Jones

Inducted January 31, 2004

Don Jones commitment to Oklahoma soccer began in 1973 when he volunteered to organize and administer a fledgling soccer organization in Tulsa area. One of seven people who had the vision of a statewide soccer program, Don worked to create Green Country Soccer Association and eventually Oklahoma Soccer Association.

Native of Arkansas who grew up in New York City, Don arrived in Oklahoma from New York after a brief tenure in California. Don used his management skills from his job with IBM to lay the foundation for Oklahoma Soccer from 1974 to 1976. Jones served as GCSA's first president. During that time period, soccer enrollment in Tulsa grew from 500 to 3000. He was appointed Youth Commissioner for the Oklahoma Soccer Association at that time, the first administrator of youth soccer in Oklahoma.

Don felt it important that every child should play at least half of every soccer game and made certain that concept was included in the GCSA bylaws. The guarantee of one half of play was the key to the rapid growth of youth soccer. Reaching beyond the Tulsa area, Don was instrumental in developing soccer throughout the state. He assisted Frontier Country Soccer Association in its early years and was eventually elected to OSA's presidency, a post he held from 1976-1978.

Highlighting those Tulsa Years was a visit by the world-famous Pele arranged through the work of Don and Tom Iadevaia. Pele only visited three American cities that year and it was the hard work of Don and others that brought the famed Brazilian to Tulsa.

After leaving Tulsa, Don completed the MBA that he had begun at the University of Tulsa and did substantial work toward the PhD degree in Management at the City University of New York. He attributed his interest and success in the management field to his seven years of administration of soccer in Oklahoma. "I was manager of a small group at IBM" says Don, "but with GCSA I had to manage hundreds. Soccer gave me that gift."

Don now resides in Ridgefield, Connecticut with his wife of 47 years, Martha Jane. Their children and grandchildren are all involved in soccer. Wes Jones and his wife Beth have four children, Katherine Jones, Ashley, Daniel, and Michaelanne Anselme. They live in Tulsa area.

Cynthia Limeburner (nee' Jones) and her husband, John, have two boys, John Wilkins and Peter Doohan. The Limeburner's live in Montreal, Canada.

Don refers to himself as "temporarily retired" but has plans to return to Tulsa in the future- a place he calls home. His call to action in 1973 is as valid today as it was then. Attending a meeting with soccer parents, Don and others were told the YMCA would not continue to support a soccer program. He turned to the assembled parents and said, "We can do something on our own."