

Honoring Stew Shacklette with the National Folk Organization's Presenting our Heritage Award

Though it is not possible for me to do justice to his life work, it is my pleasure to share with you some information about Stew Shacklette.

Stew Shacklette is known for:

- His 60 plus years of calling squares and contras in a variety of venues,
- The energy put into perfecting calling to make it clear and enjoyable as well as
- Presenting folk dance, publishing books, recordings and working with collections of music including the extensive Michael Herman FolkDancer recordings.

With over 50 years working at and for Kentucky Dance Institute and more recently the Kentucky Dance Foundation, Stew Shacklette has found a variety of ways to share his passion and knowledge with others.

Stew Shacklette's life path is reflected in a pledge taken by Kentucky Dance Institute participants:

- To promote ethnic dancing in our area,
- To be kind, courteous and thoughtful
to all participating in the activity,
- To be sincerely friendly,
and to share in the responsibility
of attaining standards set by the leaders
in the various fields of dance.

When queried by interviewers for the Country Dance and Song Society Don & Sylvia Coffey, long time dancers and organizers of Frankfort, KY as to highlights in his past Shacklette responded.

"Besides dancing on (roller) skates, I remember teaching dancing on horseback, when I called for 4 squares of kids on horses. They liked it so well I was asked to do it again at the county fair and then again at the state fair.

In addition Stew mentioned two honors he has received:

2001 the National Dance Award from San Antonio College and in 2003 the Milestone Award from Callerlab.

I would like to share a few anecdotes collected while researching for this presentation:

1. Jim Mayo provided links to information on Stew and mentioned that in addition to his work in dance, Stew had made a lovely wooden jewelry box for Jim's wife Joanne. *Additionally, Jim sends his regards and congratulations to Stew.*
2. Cal Campbell recalls meeting Stew in 1959 (while Cal was in college) at a

national square dance convention. Shacklette was involved with a pageant involving 500 people doing the Kentucky Running Set.

-Campbell also spoke about Shacklette's passion for history; the universality of dance and that dance is a good way of communicating.

-He noted that Stew gets along with everyone.

-Cal also mentioned that whenever Stew teaches, he provides a syllabus and music for participants. (Note: This is a reflection of the challenges Shacklette met when he started and there were no written materials.)

Cal sends congratulations to Stew & wants to get in touch.

3. Sandy Starkman (who is with us today) of Mainewoods Dance Camp commented that Stew is a terrific caller. He makes one feel so good on the dance floor. His singing calls are wonderful. Starkman was also impressed with Stew's ability to help people learn the dances and calls without being upset with people when they didn't understand or made mistakes. Sandy cherishes the hand made wooden jewelry box Stew crafted and gifted her.

And one last anecdote:

4. Stew reflected his high esteem for the international folk dance community for their openness and welcoming new dance material, noting that not all dance communities do so.

The support that Stew Shacklette has received from his family to continue his pursuit of dance, and music are well received.

References:

[Stew Shacklette and the Folk Dancer Record Center](#)

www.cdss.org/tl_files/cdss/newsletter.../2010-summer_shacklette.pdf

[STEW SHACKLETTE MILESTONE 2003 - Callerlab](#)

[www.callerlab.org/Portals/3/MilestoneInfo/Shacklette_Stew_\(2003\).pdf](http://www.callerlab.org/Portals/3/MilestoneInfo/Shacklette_Stew_(2003).pdf)

[Milestone Award - 2003 Stew Shacklette Presented By ... - Callerlab](#)

www.callerlab.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=zpWUlka6Rg%3D...

The Kentucky Running Set: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6lByCYHZyk>

Personal communication with Stew Shacklette 3/10/14

Publications:

[Contra calling made easy : workbook on basics of contra dancing by Stew Shacklette](#)

() 1 edition published in 1980

Nine week square dance training program : for grades 4 thru 7 by Stew Shacklette (Book) 1 edition published in 1981

Contra prompting handbook : suggested programs for square dance callers by Stew Shacklette (Book) 1 edition published in 1982

Stew's folly : 186 contras and other things by Stew Shacklette (Book) 1 edition published in 1998

Presented by Roo Lester Friday 14 March 2014