

Ty & Ann Rotruck

Editor's Note:

We recently lost a legend in the area of Colorado Round Dancing. We lost Ty in 2013 and we lost Ann in February 2021. Following are two articles written about them. The first is the article which is written about them in the CRDA Hall of Fame. The second is a resume that Ty & Ann wrote themselves about their impact on the Round Dance world. They made contributions in our local area along with our state and national levels. Their names are etched in the history of Round Dancing.



It seems that Ty and Ann Rotruck have been contributing to Round Dancing in Colorado forever. Way back in the 60s, they learned to Square Dance and then to Round Dance. Since the very beginning they have worked to keep Square and Round dancing together. They have danced with virtually all the clubs in the Denver area. Their membership in the CRDA goes back to 1964. Even before they were active as cuers they contributed to the CRDA. They were newsletter editors for a couple of years; they have held offices of treasurer, vice-president, and president; and they worked out the early procedures for the consistent operation of the CRDA. They started teaching Round Dancing in 1973. That same year, they bought the old church from Jack and Darlene Chaffee and named it the "Truck Stop". The operation of this building brought them in contact with most of the local dancers and cuers and led to their famous collection of photos featuring national callers and cuers. For 17 years the Truck Stop was the home of their own Round Dance program and influenced a large number of dancers. Ty and Ann have also been active in many caller and cuer organizations. They have been officers in the Denver Area Caller's Association and in Roundalab. They have attended and taught at many state and national festivals. Through this, they have been busy promoting the Colorado dance activities and acting as ambassadors of the local dance activity. They have been the featured instructors for at least a dozen of these festivals. For the past seven years they have spent the winter in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas., but every year they have come back to Colorado where they make their home and dance with their longtime friends. In May of 1997 they were inducted into the Denver Area Square and Round Dance Council's Hall of Fame. Now they are being inducted into our CRDA Hall of Fame.

RESUME – by TY AND ANN ROTRUCK

Ty and Ann met while roller skating and were married in 1945. Although they had planned to participate in Square Dancing early in their marriage; family, college and house remodeling interfered, and it was not until 1960 that they were able to schedule a beginning Square Dance class. This was also their introduction to Round Dancing as their caller instructor included mixers and easy rounds as part of his beginning Square Dance program. Becoming fascinated with Round Dancing, they attended a beginning Round Dance class taught by Charlie and Jerry Tuffield and danced spasmodically with their Silver Dollar Club and other area Round Dance clubs.

After Ty received his degree in Mathematics, more time was available, and they began dancing regularly with the Chaffee's. This began ten years of wonderful carefree Round and Square Dancing. They traveled the country attending festivals and Round and Square Dance weeks. Ty and Ann treasure the memory of the wonderful people met, and the many friends made during these travels.

Ty and Ann began their teaching careers in 1973 when the Chaffees decided to move to Mesa, Arizona, and were asked to consider taking over their clubs. After serious consideration, Ty and Ann decided to give teaching a try, and also decided to buy Chaffee's "old church". With a vision of making it into an exceptional center for round and square dancing.

It is the dream of many teachers and callers to have their own hall. Ty and Ann accomplished this on their own and are extremely proud of the "Truck Stop" as the hall was named (a play on their name and no semis



have shown up - yet). The experience of bringing the Truck Stop Center into fruition is another story in itself. Particularly, when the building was completely torn apart, and they found they had insufficient funds to continue, and to complete it. The Truck Stop was paid off on April 1st, 1986. They are extremely grateful to the dancers and clubs that stayed with them while they developed the skills necessary to become competent teachers and hall managers. Their advice to anyone wanting to build or remodel a hall is to be sure to have 200% utilization and forget it unless they are millionaires.

While spending countless hours remodeling and maintaining the Truck Stop, Ty and Ann also had to learn to teach and to cue four different levels of Round Dancing at the same time as they took over easy, intermediate, and high intermediate clubs as well as starting a beginning class. Hindsight says this is not the recommended approach. Ty and Ann now have fourteen years of teaching and operating clubs and are proud of their graduates, and those who have moved on to become teachers/cuers.

Currently, Ty and Ann operate three different level clubs the year round (Phase I & II+; Phase III & IV+; Phase V & VI). They conduct two beginning classes each year, and one or two intermediate (Phase III - V) classes. Ann graduated from Herb Egender's Columbine Caller Cues School so both Ty and Ann cue for numerous area square dance clubs. They are Club cuer for a closed Advance square dance club (Mavericks) whose philosophy is to encourage Round Dancing at the advanced level. They are also Club teacher and cuer for a long-established Denver Waltz Club who use the Truck Stop. Ann is the dance choreographer for this dance team. Her most successful dance is "Me and My Shadow" written for a Colorado State Square Dance Festival, and which became a ROM around the country. Others are "The Entertainer", "My Favorite Things", "Little Bitty Tears", and a series of excellent unpublished dances written as exhibition dances based on the theme of the Maverick's yearly party dance. Due to the responsibilities imposed by the Truck Stop, dance composition has been a secondary activity.

Ty and Ann have participated in six National Square Dance Festivals as well as numerous Colorado State Square Dance and Colorado Round Dance Festivals. They have been featured instructors at Round and Square Dance festivals throughout the western states, conducted weekends for local clubs, and annually put on a traditional "Christmas in July" Round Dance party at the Truck Stop.

At the present, Ty and Ann are members of Roundalab, URDC, Colorado Round Dance Association, Denver Area Callers Association, and numerous state and local councils, so they are cognizant of local Round Dance trends. They have just completed six years on the Board of Directors of Roundalab where they were Standardization Planning Chairman for their entire term on the Board. They are past presidents of the Colorado Round Dance Association as well as former Newsletter editor and treasurer. They have also been treasurer and on the executive board of the Denver Area Callers Association.

They feel their major contribution to dancing in the Denver area is making available a clean, wholesome, and technically excellent Round and Square facility where a goodly number of dancers have enjoyed excellent Round and Square Dancing to top leaders. On the state level, they believe their work in developing a Handbook of Policies, Duties, and Procedures put the Colorado Round Dance Association on a business-like operational basis. Nationally, they are proud of the progress made in Round standardization over the past six years, and although there is still a long way to go, they believe the impact will be long lasting.

Their basic philosophy of round dance instruction is to keep it FUN while emphasizing basics and maximizing the use of hash cues. In the beginning MAKE HASTE SLOWLY and minimize teaching numbers of routines until the basics are being danced comfortably. Precision and styling should be introduced as soon as feasible. Flexibility is paramount, since every class is different, so the teacher must adapt their program and techniques to their student's needs. They feel continuing education and self-improvement is extremely important, so they attend seminars, and are building an extensive library of books, audio and video tapes. Finally, they believe Round And Square Dancing belong together, and the high level, experienced dancer should participate at all levels.