

## Lester J. "Whitey" White - Indiana HOF Inductee History Induction Ceremony Held on June 14, 2003

Lester J. "Whitey" White started promoting shuffleboard in the 1970's and was involved in shuffleboard for over 25 years. He ran tournaments in Indiana and Ohio and started a Ladies Shuffleboard League in Muncie at Borders Bar. He recruited players from Indiana to Portland which was the start of the Central Indiana Shuffleboard League. The league had as many as 32 teams with sponsor sale and a single elimination bring your own partner format with participants coming from Yorktown, Muncie, Ingalls, Portland, Summitville, Anderson, Fairmont and Chesterfield. Under Whitey's leadership the league ran smoothly. The league went on for several years and his wife Connie and Don "D.C." Criswell helped the league continue after his untimely death in 1981.

The Central Indiana Shuffleboard League presented Whitey with a plaque for his accomplishments. He was a teacher, promoter, record keeper, and ran many tournaments in Indiana.

### Players Comments:

- "If it hadn't been for Whitey, there wouldn't be a Delaware County Shuffleboard League" -- C.W. Kiser
- "Good promoter of the game!!" -- Dave Welch
- "First name I heard when I started to play."  
-- Jeri Ingram

*[Editors Comment: Below is an article reprint about Lester J. White (1930-1981) which was published in the Muncie Weekly News on Thursday, November 26, 1981 (Page 5, Opinion section, by Thomas Thornburg) which gives a great insight to his life.]*

MUNCIE WEEKLY NEWS THURS. NOVEMBER 26, 1981

## Opinion

# Lester J. White 1930-1981

When March comes gusting north out of South Munsee next time around and the earth turns over and comes to taw at the vernal equinox in solemn obedience to immutable law and the children begin to hit the street and hop their hop-scotch or come to taw in an eternal game of Mother-May-I? according to their shrill obedience to that same immutable law; when you catch the brilliant surprise of the crocus crowning under the late inevitable heavy wet of incredible beauty along the boulevard we all wait for; when the ground hog who lives at the bend in the river wakes up and comes out to look for his shadow and finds it; when you walk on down the street and catch a kid shucking his coat and kicking a can along, doo dah, doo dah, and you ask him how much wood he thinks a wood-chuck could chuck if a wood-chuck could chuck wood; next spring in our Saturday when those of us who are going make it through this winter now fallen upon us have made it through, we are all going to be the less for it, one winter older all of us, brothers and sisters, one season shorter in our time in Time, because when we lose a man like Lester J. White we cannot double the bet and recoup our losses, no way, because Lester J. White was a unique and rare human being and he is dead. Whitey's gone.

Lester J. White served honorably in the Air Force and the Army of the United States of America. An aircraft pilot and a soldier for his country, he saw a

town than the most of us do. Energetic and helpful, street smart and more than a little academically learned, Whitey was witty and funny and charitable. He helped people when people needed help, and when he found out what a full time job of helping people is, he never once shirked it. If a man was down on his uppers and needed a drink, Whitey bought that drink; when Whitey saw a man hungry, he fed that man; when a woman on this side of the bar was weeping in her beer, Whitey listened and provided the hanky; and when men and women helplessly in love did their damndest to break every bone in Love's body, Whitey did what he could to mend the break. He was some man, all right; all wool and a yard wide, he had the look of far horizons in his eyes, but was built close to the sidewalk and never forgot it. And when someone started wiping down the shuffleboard and snaking the dust can down its serpentine path over the glossed surface; when the warm-ups began and the pucks started chucking into the far end, bang, bang, bang, click, bang, Whitey's eyes would light up like stars in December.

Whitey was a shuffleboard player; he was expert with his right hand and he had a left to match it; he could go down the right side or the left and leave the puck hanging on the precipice, just leave that stainless steel saucer gyroing in place there like the surface tension on a rim shot of tequila while your mouth fell open in disbelief, men on the wrong side

## Going Around by Thomas Thornburg

and he could do this; he could bump yours and leave his; he could go cross-court or he could play it straight; he could set up a Maginot Line right in your own back yard or he could go for broke; right hand English, left hand English, or no English at all, and when he wanted to he could make that puck play back up, buddy. And then one bright day Whitey stopped playing.

Whitey stopped playing so he could take the time to set up tournaments so that other people could share the pleasures he found in playing shuffleboard. Whitey set up the Midwest Calcutta Shuffleboard Tournament. He set up the brackets and seeded the seeds; he collected the entry fees and he got the names down in black and white and spelled proper; he iced the beer, swabbed the deck, picked up the money and put down the bets. Then he fed the jukebox and the game was on. It was full-tilt boogie and have a beer on the house in one of the funniest and most exciting cultural phenomena you are ever not going to see again this side of the Pecos. Players from Bill and Joe's in Anderson, The Hideout in Yorktown, The Hoghouse in Ingalls, The Palace in Fairmount, Buss's in Marion. The

Don Criswell's Border Tavern and shot their hearts out, their pockets flat, and their minds awry, the sun rose and the sun fell; the moon came out, took a look and went back in; stars fell on the sidewalk and we gave them away for

souvenirs. What a dizzy day that was. What a bright memory Whitey gave us all. And now he is done giving Saturdaytown everything he gave us because he is gone.

What can we say, brothers and sisters, in the court of immutable Law? Serving the same mysterious sentence we all do, what these poor sentences I have tried to share with Lester White. I do not know what he gave you but he gave me a star for my memory's pocket. Warm Bright Precious Goodbye, Whitey. Thank you.