

JACK STEFFENSEN (ACTION JACKSON)

SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2004



ESA/PACIFIC NORTHWEST SHUFFLEBOARD HALL OF FAME



JACK STEFFENSEN
by Michelle Foran
and others

Jack was born in Badger, South Dakota at his Grandmother Steffensen's home on February 25th, 1942. He joined two brothers, Jerry 5 years old and Jim 1 ½ years old. Jack and Jim were the best playmates through their toddler years. Five and a half years later a sister, Joannie, joined the family. They lived on a farm where the boys had a pony named Beauty. They rode Beauty back and forth to the country school that they attended until moving to Huron, SD in 1950. Living close to a river gave Jack lots of practice at fishing for bullheads. He provided the family with many fish dinners. Jack liked to play baseball and hike with his brothers and neighbor kids. While hiking one day Jack found an old weather parachute and thought he could jump off of the roof of the house. He got the wind knocked out of him and scared the whole neighborhood but nothing was broken. He was lucky on that adventure. In 1960 he married Linda VanDerArde and they had two sons, Rick and Scott. Jack worked in construction, the Armour packing plant and Fairmont foods before moving to Washington in 1966. When Jackson moved to Washington he was employed at Boelings for 5 years until the big layoff in 1971. He then went to work at Industrial Rubber Supply until retiring after 22 years. Jackson's interest in shuffleboard started in the spring of 1978. Jack worked with Rob Heidal and Al Green. Rob and Al were into shuffleboard with Jim Foran and Mike Waters and others who played out of Max and Dick's Tavern. Ken Bills, the owner of Max and Dick's, sponsored Jim's traveling team and Jack went and watched them play out of town a couple of times. He even got to see Billy Mays do his trick shots for the television cameras. All of this contributed to Jack's growing interest in playing shuffleboard. And play he did. After a few lessons from Al Green he started playing on leagues. He played on the Tuesday night money league, the Thursday night fun league and Sunday Mixed league. On Fridays nights he played at Larry and Rays' draw and on Saturday nights he played at the Loop Tavern draw. He played five night's a week and loved it. Jack was a very good hard rock player. He really blasted the weights. Jack played in many of the tournaments in the northwest during the 80's and early 90's.

Jack was a wonderful down to earth person and a friend to everyone, even the occasional stranger. He would help his friends do just about anything because he COULD DO just about anything. When Jack became ill he was unbelievable. He still did more than most people that weren't ill. He never stopped. When Jack's disease progressed he wasn't able to play league anymore but when Jim Foran called him and asked him to sub on his team Jack was always there. Why? Because he loved the game and he loved his friends. When Jack finally couldn't play board much at all he would still come out and watch his friends play and support the tavern owners.

Jack inspired and taught many young players learn the game of shuffleboard and helped keep shuffleboard alive in Tacoma and surrounding areas for many years. On Wednesdays Jack would go golfing and on the way home he would stop at the Shamrock Tavern in Tacoma and play board. People that had never played shuffleboard or were just beginning watched him and they became really interested in the game. Jack taught them how to play and they still play to this day. In fact two of them are the tournament directors for his Memorial Tournament. They and others that he inspired will be at his tournament. Jack's inspiration still beats in the hearts of those he touched. We will leave his Memorial Tournament without his physical presence but his spirit will be in our minds and our souls. Jack passed away on September 21, 2002. He was 60.