

**The California
Shuffleboard Hall of Fame**

proudly inducts

Don Cox



**Presented
Saturday, May 27, 2000
at**

**Blinky's Sports Cafe
Santa Clara, California**

**CONGRATULATIONS
DON COX**



THIS IS YOUR LIFE!

DON COX — THIS IS YOUR LIFE

by Rick Thomas

Don Cox was born on February 9, 1944 in Sacramento, California. He attended El Warren Grammar School in South Sacramento and later graduated from Rio Linda High School in Sacramento.

While in high school, Don fell in love with his future bride, Donna, and they married May 18, 1963 in Reno.

In the early years, Don was the Foreman in Shipping and Receiving for Sacramento Foods for 18 years. Later, he worked for a pest control company for six years.

Don was competitive from a very young age, mainly because of his older brothers, Carl and Bobby Cox. They were always into something, such as drag racing, motorcycles, slot cars, small airplanes, go carts, cards, dominos and stock car dirt track racing. Don raced stock cars for approximately 10 years, from 1965 to 1975 in Northern California.

In their younger years, all three brothers competed in shuffleboard. Don and Bobby Cox were more into playing, although Carl always felt he could beat the two of them. Don and Bob began playing in a league in 1967, and then played in small local tournaments. Don won his first shuffleboard tournament at the Elverta Tavern, California in 1968. Don also played at a local bar named the Briar Patch.

One day in 1968, after his tournament win, Joe Hudson came into the Briar Patch and beat Don out of a hundred dollars real quick, at \$20 a game. At that time he became acquainted with Joe Hudson, Hal

Perry and Fred Thuman, and they all soon became friends.

Don was invited to play on the Auburn Club League Team and learned how the game of shuffleboard was supposed to be played. Don met many of the pro players at the Auburn Club tournaments, namely Freddie Johns, T.A. Adams, Glen Davidson, Leroy Ledford, Billy Mays, Bob Hunt, Nick Chaffin and Bob Miles. While playing in the Auburn League, they played Bob Hunt's team, and Nick Chaffin's and Leroy Ledford's team.

Although the Auburn Club had tough teams, they took 1st place for several years.

Don's first major tournament win was at the Happy Hour in 1976 in San Jose, Oregon. His second tourney win was in 1977, where he placed 1st in Singles at the Low Rent Tavern in Marysville. (Ah, fond memories!)

In 1977 the World Team Championships were held in Longview, Washington at the Fairgrounds with 28 plus (6-man teams) competing. Don said it was quite a sight to see 18-20 shuffleboard lined up in a row. When they arrived, they were told they were up, and didn't have time to check into their room and unpack. The odds of winning were not good, since they had no time to practice. The only California team consisted of Don Cox, Hal Perry, Joe Hudson, Fred Thuman, Leroy Ledford and Billy Mays. When all was said and done, the California team won it all. Don said it was a great victory for California and a very special day for all of them, even to this day.

When the Auburn Club closed in 1977, Don began

playing at the Ace of Clubs in Marysville, California. He continued to play the pros, and proceeded to lose lots of money. He was determined to become a pro, so he continued to play in tournaments to see how many he could eliminate before he was eliminated. He teamed up with Leroy Ledford and from 1978 to 1987 they dominated the Ace of Clubs tournaments.

Don continued to play money games and tournaments. Many weekends he played from Friday night until Monday morning when he had to go to work. (What a bummer!) The bars were open 24 hours a day, and if they weren't, you didn't play there.

After the Ace of Clubs closed, Don began playing tournaments at Blinky's Sports Club in Santa Clara, California. Don has won at Blinky's with Hal Perry, Jim Allis, Darrol Nelson and Gene Jennings. (More memories.)

Don went on the road with several pros. In 1978 he went on a trip with Billy Mays. Billy assured Don that they were going to make a lot of money. They went busted, and Don had to play just to get money to get home. He quit playing for 6 months until he realized *he* wasn't the reason they lost.

Don played with and won with Darrol Nelson, Billy Mays, Leroy Ledford, Jerry Warren, Jimmy Allis, Bruce Hale, brother Bobby Cox, and last but not least, his lovely wife Donna.

Then there were 8 second places with Fred Thuman. (How many, Freddie?) Don has played in California, Arizona, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Oklahoma and Nevada. Don has worked and played hard to become the player he is today. Don has won a total of 31 tournaments.

Looking back, Don, we met about 10 years ago when Kathy and I saw our first pro shuffleboard tournament at the Ace of Clubs.

The first game we saw was on Board One, and the players were Don Cox and Diana Hagan. We were truly impressed at the level of competition and shot making at the pro level. You were very impressive, and as we saw it, a competitive giant.

It is a joy to watch you play, and your induction into the California shuffleboard Hall of Fame is extremely justified. Thank you, Don, for being our friend.

Sincerely,

Rick & Kathy Thomas

P.S. Remember the Phantom.

When I was asked about voting for Donnie Cos to be inducted into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame, my first thought was that he is overqualified.

That was my last thought, too.

Sincerely

Jolene Lembke

President, California

Shuffleboard Hall of Fame

The Board Talk

George & Donna Wilber, Publishers
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**To: The California Shuffleboard
Hall of Fame Committee**

The Induction of Don Cox

It is with a great deal of pleasure that we add our endorsement of Don Cox for induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. We also applaud the Hall of Fame for selecting such a worthy candidate.

We have been admirers of Donny for many years, not just as one of the top players in the U.S.A., but as a gentleman and a shining example of good sportsmanship. He is an outstanding teacher for the game, always willing to share his expertise with others.

One of George's greatest shuffleboard experiences was playing with Donny in a Draw Partner Event at a PCSA Extravaganza in Las Vegas.

We appreciate the opportunity we have had to record his many achievements and to call him a friend.

George and Donna Wilber

Donnie's Friends Comment . . .

I can't think of anyone more deserving than Don Cox to be inducted into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

I've played with and against Don for thirty years, and I've seen most of the great ones play.

Don Cox ranks at the top with the very best.

A great lagger, a fierce competitor, and I'm proud to say he's my friend.

Don Cox is as good as it gets.

Congratulations

Your friend

Joe Hudson

Don Cox has been a top player for many years. He has supported many tournaments nationwide.

He's a player whose dedication to the game of shuffleboard is second to none.

I heartily support his induction to the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. This honor is well deserved.

Congratulations, Don!

Rich "Bubba" Warren

Don is one of the greatest players of all time.

His ten-year domination at the Marysville tournaments where all of the top shuffleboard players in the country participated is a feat unparalleled.

Foe sometimes, good friend always.

Congratulations to Mr. Don Cox on his induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Bob Hunt

More from Don's Friends:

I have known Don Cox for many years. I don't know where or when we met, but it probably was at some local bar that had a shuffleboard.

Early on, he used to go to the Happy Hour in San Jose and watch the players and play some.

Over the years through a lot of hard work, Don has made himself into a great player. He plays tournaments and sessions equally well. He is a great logger, has fine board play, and is an extremely intelligent player.

I don't know of anyone who likes to play more than Don. He is always very tough on me when we play.

Don is a very fine addition to the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Congratulations,
Nick Chaffin

I've known Donnie Cox for many years, as he would come to Arizona to participate in our tournaments, and in Vegas when we would go there.

Wherever and whenever I saw him, I observed several things: fierce competition, an excellent player, and regardless of the end result, always conducting himself in a quiet, gentlemanly manner.

A well deserved tribute to a fine player and a fine gentleman.

Alice Arredondo

Donny's Friends Speak Out . . .

I heard the name Donny Cox long before I met him. When I first started playing shuffleboard, all I heard was "Donny Cox this," and "Donny Cox that," and that he was a great tournament and session player.

I then had the pleasure of playing against him and thought, man, this guy has no left hand.

I went home and told my buddies that Donny had no left hand. They laughed at me.

I said, "I'm serious—he doesn't have a left hand.

They said, "Go play with him again—his left is better than his right.

Young and cocky, I said, "I will!"

The next time I played Donny, my eyes got opened wide. He is not only a great tournament and session player, but a great hustler. I learned an invaluable lesson in shuffleboard.

Congratulations and thank you to a great person.

Sincerely,

Dave Keithahn

I have known Donny Cox for many, many years. Not only is he one of the greatest shuffleboard players in the history of the game, but also a great gentleman.

He has been my teacher and mentor for all of my shuffleboard years.

He is most deserving of the honor of being inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Bruce Hale

Donnie's Friends Speak Out . . .

I would say that inducting Don Cox into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame was not a tough decision. Why? Because Don is a great money player and yes, also a great tournament player. Not a bad combination!

Would you like to know how this came about? Well, it's quire simple. **HARD WORK!** Yes, no one in this game worked any harder to reach the top. Don probably spent ten years on the road playing anyone he could, to improve his game. Believe me, when he finally put it all together he became a **MONSTER!** Don and Leroy won the Ace of Clubs Tournament so many times, they should have re-named it "The Don & Leroy Invitational."

I suffered the biggest loss of my forty-year careen one weekend at Don's house. I should have known I was in trouble when Don and Donna kept trying to get me to stop playing. Well, I finally did. But not before I helped them make a few months' payments on their house, shuffleboard, car, and possibly even college tuition. Looking back, it seems as though they could have given me the shuffleboard as a consolation prize.

Don is one of my heroes. I'm proud to have him as a California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame roommate. But, do remember—he got there the old fashioned way—he earned it.

Congratulations,

Hal Perry

More from Donnie's Friends:

How does one put in a couple of paragraphs a tribute to a shuffleboard player whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for well over 30 years.

It's difficult and impossible. It's been my pleasure, not only to know Donnie Cox, but to have been able to be his partner in oh so many tournaments.

To me, Donnie has taught us all how to win, to never, never give up, and this also pertains to one's personal life, not just shuffleboard.

Throughout the United States, he is known as one of the guttiest laggors to ever play the game. I can attest to that. A word that probably would be used by most to describe him in shuffleboard would be "no fear."

I just can't describe all that he means to the game of shuffleboard or to me. I've been told to keep this short and, this would take a whole lot of pages. So, with a little luck I will get to speak at his induction and give some blow by blow stories, and what he has done for the game.

So for now, Donnie Cox, I say to you, it's my pleasure to congratulate you on your induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Thank you for being my partner and most of all, thank you for being my friend.

Lois and I are elated for you, and wish you the best of luck.

Fred Thuman

Donnie's Friends Pay Tribute . . .

The first time I saw Don Cox was right after I moved here from Nebraska.

I didn't know anyone in shuffleboard on the West Coast.

I remember saying to a friend, "Did you see the guy in the baseball hat shoot yet? He is good!" (He won, by the way.)

A few years later I had a chance to be his partner in a Pro-Am event in Reno. He pulled me up to a second place finish.

That guy in a baseball hat must be good!

Congratulations, Don,
Bob Jacobson

I can't think of anyone more deserving of induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame than Don Cox.

Your great playing and your competitive nature has made you one of the top players in this sport.

Sincerely,

Paul Weber

More from Donnie's Friends:

Donnie:

I just have one thing to say—I wish I could shoot shuffleboard as well as you do.

You are one great player who deserves to be in the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame if anyone does.

I have watched you play for several years and tried to mimic that release of yours, and never could. Maybe someday you will teach me how to do it.

Although I had planned to attend your induction, something came up, and I cannot be there. Please forgive me for that.

I want to wish you the best in shuffleboard and / or whatever your future endeavors may be.

I know that you will make all those of us who never make it to your elevated status very proud.

Sincerely,

Ruth Miles

More from Donnie's friends . . .

I first met Donnie in the early eighties at the Ace of Clubs in Marysville, California at either the Memorial Day or Labor Day Tournament. He was a good player then, and, like a good wine, he only improved with age.

I also remember seeing Donnie play in Temecula at Ted Z's. It was there that he began to complain about his Calcutta being too high. Little did he know that this was just the beginning.

The more he won, the higher his Calcutta went. I never remember him complaining that the prize money was too high!

I have always had a lot of respect for Donnie, both in his ability to shoot a good game, and in the way he has always been a gentleman and a tribute to Shuffleboard.

Sincerely,

Bob Brunskill

Donnie Cox has been one of the top shuffleboard players in California for the past twenty years. He is one tough player and competitor.

Whenever I think of Donnie, I think, "Number One"! The team of Donnie and Leroy Ledford was very hard to beat.

Congratulations!

Karl Spickelmier