



THE CALIFORNIA SHUFFLEBOARD HALL OF FAME

Induction Ceremony Honoring

James "Long Beach Jim" McDonald

Presented at

Exeter Eagles Lodge
Exeter, California

July 3, 2010

CALIFORNIA SHUFFLEBOARD HALL OF FAME

INDUCTION CEREMONY

For

JAMES "LONG BEACH JIM" MCDONALD

Saturday, July 3, 2010

At

Exeter Eagles Lodge
Exeter, California

Master of Ceremonies

Rick Thomas
CSHOF Vice
President

Tributes

Robbie Gann
Hal Perry
Troy Tolbert

Video

Jim Martin

Induction and Award Presentation

Jim Martin
CSHOF President

JAMES "Long Beach Jim" MCDONALD



Daughter Rhonda and Jim

James was born in Arkansas on July 29th 1934. He went to school there and played high school football and loved to fish.

In 1955 he moved to Kansas and met Bob Tile who introduced him to shuffleboard. They played a game called "frames". Back then they carried hammer. James learned to shoot hard and admitted he wasn't very good at that time. He and Bob played at almost every bar that had a shuffleboard and joined leagues. They played twice a week and had shirts with their names and the name of the bar. The fee was \$2.00.

Sometimes James would attend a tournament, not to play but just to watch. It was at one of these tournaments that he met Billy Mays and Rod Cameron. He thought these two guys were the best ever!

Shortly after that, James relocated to Long Beach, CA. It was at this time that James was dubbed with the name of "Long Beach Jim" This is where he first played on a board that kept score and he learned "switch hammer." Here he first met Tommy Workman. Tommy taught Jim and was very careful who he let play against him. The big action was at the *Blue Star* in El Monte, CA. Tommy would tell Jim; "not yet!" In the meantime they played every weekend all around town. Jim was getting stronger and stronger, but they didn't play tournaments or round robins. Finally, the day came for them to play at the *Blue Star*. That weekend Tommy and Jim did not lose a game, they even beat Billy Mays and Bob Miles. Jim felt pretty good about that.

There was action everywhere. They played Jack Ahern, DP Jones, Joe Muniz, Al Stewart, Troy Tolbert, "Overalls" Clyde, Big Vern, Billy Chiles, Donny Hughes, Leroy Wagner and many other great players, beating them all. Jim made several road trips with Leroy and Troy, traveling as far as New Mexico.

Jim played about 10 years with Tommy and relocated again to the Visalia area. He then started playing at a bar called *The Hut* and later at *Mr. G's*. This is where he started teaching. He taught and gave pointers to other players including Steve Floyd, Wes Martin, Sal Reynoso and Larry Newell. Jim says the reason he'd like to be in the hall of fame is for his teaching and for his love of the game.

One of the things Jim was noted for was his unique shuffleboard release - a reverse Jersey. According to Troy Tolbert, it would spin left instead of right, and then back up. He used it with both hands, but his right hand was a little stronger.

Jim has three children, daughters Rhonda Fitzwater (Nevada), and Tanya McDonald (Oklahoma) and a son, Danny McDonald who lives in Southern Ca. He also has a step-grandson, Blaine Babb that he raised as his son. There are also 3 granddaughters, Amber (Oklahoma), Sherry and Christine (Nevada), and 3 grandsons, Aaron (California), Shane (Nevada) and David (Nevada). Jim passed away in April, 2010. He is survived by his wife, Vivian.



James was not just my brother, he was my friend. We grew up in Arkansas. He loved playing football in high school. He didn't make it to be a pro, but he was my hero. He liked to go fishing with our Uncle Bruce. When James was about 12 he slipped down an embankment with hooks in his back pocket. He had to stand up in the back of the car all the way to the doctor.

Our mother and brothers were always glad when James came back to Kansas for a visit. I enjoyed visiting him in California and going to watch him play shuffleboard.

We met in Arkansas a few years back for a camping trip. We had so much fun sitting by the campfire listening to the music made by our uncles, aunts and cousins playing the guitar and singing. Later, I came to visit in Nevada. We enjoyed having breakfast and talking over old times.

As we grew up we were very poor. But I didn't know how poor we were because I had a big brother who made things easier for me. It was me and him against the world. I'm going to miss him so much.

Sorry I can't be there today but my thoughts and prayers are with family and friends.

Jim's sister, Bernice
[Eulogy read at Jim's funeral service]

TRIBUTES

Besides being a good player, Jim McDonald was a “good guy”. He was one of the friendliest people in the world of shuffleboard.

It was always a joy to see Jim and his big smile. He has told some funny stories about himself and Troy when he played in the Los Angeles area.

We have all missed him these last few years and will continue to miss him in the future.

We love you Jim!
Robbie Scott-Gann

Jim, I could not be happier for you on your induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Jim played road trips in the early 60's with many people; Mexican Tommy, Leroy Waggoner, Billy Mays, Bob Miles & Frank Zavala to name a few. Jim was always a good competitor and a credit to the game of shuffleboard. I have played many years with and against Jim, locally and around.

Congratulations on your induction. We will certainly miss you.

Marion Bailey

I will always remember Jim for his bigger-than-life smile and personality. I remember the first time I met Jim. It was at the old Dixie Belle, and when I watched his release of the weight, I remember asking myself, “How can anyone do that?”

I am sad that Jim could not be here for his induction, but I am happy to know that he is now a part of a very elite group of people.

Congratulations Jim, and welcome to the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. You will be greatly missed.

Jim Martin
California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame President



Jim Martin & Jim McDonald, Exeter 2004

The Gentle Giant,

The man I knew was known as the teacher. He always took the time to teach, he would teach anybody who wanted to learn. Jim was the kindest man you would ever find. He would stop by Mr. G's after work, not to drink but to play shuffleboard, the game he loved. Jim would stay until closing time then go out and sleep in his Ford Granada. Jim was 6'4" and his Granada was 4' across but he slept in it. Jim's favorite rule of the game was hit, stick and lag three.

His nickname was LBJ, which stood for Long Bench Jim. He was so gentle, but, on a dime he could turn into the meanest man around. There was this time we were playing at Mr. G's and this crazy guy went off and threw a glass against the wall and came at Jim. He took a swing at Jim who reached out and caught the swing (with his bare hand) and just melted the guy to the ground. Jim talked softly to the guy saying, "Hey, you don't want to do this," and the problem was over.

I will never forget the Gentle Giant.

Wes Martin

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Jim is a person very deserving of this honor, to be placed among all the pioneers of the game. He was a great player and a great person.

Your Partner,
Russ Lankton



Frank Zavalla, Russ Lankton, Jim

I can't remember when I didn't know Big Jim. I called him "Big Smiling Jim." The two of us won a little tournament at Mr. G's and of course I was thrilled. We had so much fun through the years and bonded as true friends. I missed him when he moved away, but we kept in touch and I just want him to know that I'll be his partner anytime.

*Love you my friend,
Leslie Lankton*

He was known as Long Beach Jim, but we laid claim to Jim for many years at Mrs. G's and later the Eagles' Lodge.

Jim had a unique style of delivery and it was fun to watch him play. He was always a contender and was a champion at keeping the board clean.

We will all miss Jim and his ready smile. So, bye for now my friend.

Charlene Goldsmith



Jim with several of his family members

Jim McDonald's induction to the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame is well deserved. We always had a good time whenever we played.

Rich (Bubba) Warren

I played a lot of shuffleboard with Jim McDonald. I am glad he is being inducted into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Donny Hughes

Jimmy was a great, dear friend for 50 years. I first met him in Wilmington, Ca when I saw him play on a shuffleboard and I didn't know what it was. To me it looked like a 21 ft pool table. I asked him a few questions about it, he said: "Why don't you stop by for a few days and I'll help you play." He did. In fact, the pupil had outshone the master after another year.

He was one of the first guys I ever went to Visalia with. We had no problem up there, he could really play then. But, like everyone else in our golden years, we kind of fell out of it.

Jimmy's idol was Tommy Workman, but Jimmy and I did more together than he and Tommy did. We all lived in the same neighborhood, but me with the one hand, we were able to get more action than Tommy could.

He was always a great guy, he'd do anything for you. I rarely heard him say a bad thing about anybody. If it wasn't for him, I probably wouldn't have played shuffleboard.

Thanks Jimmy,

Troy Tolbert



Grandson Aaron, Jim, Rhonda, son Danny

I first met Jim in the 60's and did not really get to know him that well, but I do remember one thing about Jim's style of play. He had one of the most unorthodox releases that I have ever seen. I could not believe that he could shoot as well as he did with that release. I do remember what a great person Jim was.

My congratulations go out to Jim and his family for Jim's induction into the CSHOF.

Sincerely,
Joe Muniz

Every time I was up in Exeter or Visalia playing with Troy, Jimmy was there rooting for us. I always liked him and was happy to see him.

Billy Maxwell

We called him "Greyhound." We were traveling up north and we used to bet on everything; pool, poker, whatever. Some guy said; "I'm a fast racer, what about a foot race?" We turned to Jim who said, "Oh yeah, I can beat him." But he didn't. We called him Greyhound after that anyway.

He was a hell of a player and a lady's man. He always had a beautiful woman with him. He had the most awkward release I've ever seen. It was inside out. He taught a girl friend the same way.

We played in some scary places together. Once in New Mexico, I couldn't beat a guy on his board. I asked Jim to find another board in the area. We moved down the street and I broke the guy. He got a partner and Jim and I continued to beat him. A guy behind me told me if I lagged another 3 he would stab me in the back. I saw some big guys sitting around a table playing Black Jack. I told the bartender, "Give those guys whatever they want and keep 'em coming." Pretty soon there wasn't anybody behind me anymore.

Tommy Workman

Jim was instrumental in the high caliber of shuffleboard at Mr. G's. Some of the people he taught were Steve Floyd, Larry Newell and me. We in turn taught Ty Baines and others. His legacy will continue as his protégées teach others who will pass it along.

His induction to the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame is overdue and well deserved.

Dave Keithahn



Dave Keithahn, Rhonda, Jim

I met Jim McDonald (Long Beach Jim) at Mr. Gs in Visalia in the 80's. We had some great times as partners and as opponents. He was always a great competitor and gentleman. Jim always stood out in a crowd with his unusual and accurate "back spin" delivery. Jim's induction is well deserved!!!

Vern Booth

It was an honor to know and play Long Beach Jim in the early 60's. I'll never forget his style of shooting the weight with his hand turned inward.

I'm glad he is being inducted into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

"Humdinger" Jerry Harp

Twenty years ago Jim played for the Shuffleboard team out of Mr. G's in Visalia at the PCSA Las Vegas tournament. I also remember him from the Fourth of July tournaments held at Mr. G's.

When he lived in Southern California he was known as 'Greyhound Jim' and when he moved to the Visalia area he became known as 'Long Beach Jim.'

Jim's induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame is well deserved.

Bob Brunskill

I had known Jim McDonald for 40 years. He was the first player I ran into who released his weight counterclockwise. He was a great player and a nice guy and he deserves to be in the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Ted Z