

**The California  
Shuffleboard Hall of Fame**

proudly inducts

**Troy Tolbert**



Presented at

**Oskar's**

Bellflower, California

**November 25, 2000**

# **TROY TOLBERT**

## **THIS IS YOUR LIFE**

**by Marilyn McCracken**

Troy Tolbert was born in 1933, the son of the town's leading bootlegger (or so Troy says).

After an ordinary childhood, he came to California in 1944. When he was 15 he worked in a pool hall while he attended high school.

Troy was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1953, and served in Europe. After the service, he moved to San Pedro, California, and worked as a steel fabricator and as a roofer.

One day after work he stopped in a bar and saw Jim McDonald and some others playing shuffleboard. When he saw how much money changed hands in such a short time, he decided that this was the game for him, so in 1961 he started playing shuffleboard in earnest and he's been at it ever since

Troy has been very successful at the game, and considers one of his better accomplishments was to win the Washington's Birthday Tournament at San Jose three times in succession with three different partners.

He really enjoys the whole shuffleboard crowd, especially his three favorite partners, who will always be Jack Ahern, Chuck Kimbrough, and Bobby Goldsmith.

Troy said, "It has always amazed me that people who knew me and many of those who didn't know me would want me as a partner, and would risk their money shooting with a partner who obviously could only shoot with one hand.

"When we win, I always think, 'nice game', and when we lose, I always think, 'we'll get them the next time'."

In closing, Troy said, "I have been truly grateful to each and every person who has ever played with or against me. God bless you all."

I have known Troy for over thirty years, and have played together and against each other.

He has always been a great competitor. If or when he would lose, he would only say, "I've had a run of bad skill."

He is one of the greatest ladders the game has ever known! I welcome Troy as a most deserving candidate for the California Hall of Fame.

*Bruce H. Hale*  
*"Bellflower Bruce"*

### **More from Troy's Friends . . .**

I first met Troy in 1983 when he was on Amato's Shuffleboard Team, and I had just started playing.

In 1984, Billy Mayes had a series of tournaments in Las Vegas and I remember playing with Dave W. in the Pro-Am doubles event.

The definition of "Am" was anyone who hadn't played in either the Pro singles or Pro doubles tournaments held earlier in the year. Since Troy hadn't played in either of these, he was able to team up with Karl Spickelmier.

The format was 2 out of 3 triple eliminations which didn't help Dave and me very much since, after losing to Bill Melton and his partner, we had to play Troy and Karl twice.

Each player entered in this tournament also got a set of American weights. Somehow Troy talked Billy into letting him select from several sets and wound up with a truly matched set of weights. This is probably the reason why he was able to lag all of those threes and fours and beat all of us.

What impressed me at that time was his ability to be able to judge the differences in speed—I thought it was just luck.

Another thing that impressed me about Troy was his ability to control his ego and stop playing if he felt the odds would be too much against him. It didn't matter if it was because he had had too much or his opponent had had too

little, or just the right amount, or was just getting hot—Troy always seemed to know when to fold ‘em.

Troy didn't like playing in tournaments very much—he preferred the old fashioned money games where there would be an instant reward after winning each game and busting the opponent was the ultimate reward.

I can remember Troy trying to convince me that I should drink enough whiskey to make me fearless and therefore a better Shuffleboard player.

Troy was playing in the open doubles in Marysville in '87 and after cleaning my clock, went on to place third. At that time, I probably would have given my left one to have placed that well, but Troy was disappointed with his playing.

Since he moved to Arizona, we don't get to see Troy in action much anymore, but it will be a long time before we forget him and the look of agony on his opponents' faces when they finally realized that you just couldn't take advantage of his just shooting right handed.

Welcome to the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame—you shot your way here.

—*Bob Brunskill*

Troy Tolbert's induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame is well deserved. His knowledge of the game is unequaled. A great player, a great friend. Congrats, Troy!

*Rich "Bubba" Warren*

## **Troy's Friends Speak Out**

Troy and I have been friends for 35 years. But it hasn't always been so. I first met Troy in 1965, when he came to a little beer joint I owned, called The Hat, with Jim McDonald, Jack Ahern and Tommy Workman. They heard about us from Porter White and Jim Cable. They were the first out of towners that came to the Hut and found the "Birds' Nest on the Ground. But it was Troy and his crew that picked it!

Every Friday night around 9 o'clock they came in. When they left, all of my players would be broke and I had to sell them beer on credit for a week.

One Friday night, trying to protect my customers, I 86ed ole' Troy and his crew. But when I saw my players out in the parking lot taking them to my competitors to play, I said if they were going to lose their money, do it at my place. Troy and I have been friends ever since.

I've always admired Troy, who asked for no quarter, gave none, and when the money went down, he was a tough nut to crack.

He was the only partner I ever pulled against. Once we went to Brawley, shot Saturday and Sunday for \$100 and end. Troy shot beautifully and I shot bad, so he suggested we switch ends. It didn't change a thing. He still shot great and I shot bad, so we quit and went to a big bar-b-que.

I love to shoot partners with Troy, because he is always the same with me, win or lose.

I truly enjoy Troy coming and staying with us—we talk over a lot of old times.

Congratulations my friend—you really deserve this tribute in the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

*—Bobby Goldsmith*

I remember Troy from the good old days.

Initially I was attracted to his wit and sense of humor, but as I learned more about shuffleboard, I admired the skill he had developed playing one-handed.

He has been a great inspiration to many of us, and especially to my son.

When Michael lost the fingers on his left hand in a work-related accident in 1973, he became very despondent and very worried about how he would ever be able to make a living.

I reminded him of Troy's accident and how successful Troy had been as a welder, and in all his other endeavors, after he lost the use of one hand, and this gave Mike a whole new outlook on his future.

I'm honored to be a part of his induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

*—Jolene Lembke, President*

*California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame*

## More from Troy's Friends

I met Troy in the early sixties in a place called the 716 Club in Wilmington, California. I was playing a game for a few bucks.

Troy saw some money change hands and he became curious and wanted to know if Shuffleboard was hard to learn.

I told him I'd be happy to show him what I knew about the game, which wasn't very much. We became friends and have been friends ever since.

About this time we met Tommy Workman and he began giving us some pointers about the game.

Shortly after this, Troy had a terrible accident at his job that cost him three fingers and a thumb on his left hand.

I don't know if that gave him more incentive to play or what, but shortly after this he became one of the better players around. He developed special shots to make up for his missing digits.

A lot of the players thought he would be weak left-handed. "Don't count on it!"

It has been an honor for me to have been a friend and a partner of Troy. I have nothing but respect for him as a person and a player.

Congratulations, Troy, on your special day.

Your friend

—*Jim McDonald*



### **More from Troy's friends . . .**

Congratulations, Troy, on your induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame! You were always one of the top players, no matter where you were playing. You have also been one of the most talkative.!

Once again, Troy, congratulations!

—*Al Stewart*

Troy is a unique individual. When they made him, they broke the mold. He is a great Shuffleboard player and a credit to the game.

He is also one of the best gamblers I have ever met. Troy could find action in an empty phone booth!

Congratulations, Troy, on your induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

—*Paul Weber*

I first heard of the man named Troy in the mid 80's. That's about the time I picked up the game of Shuffleboard. I didn't believe it was possible for a man with only one hand to beat me at the game, but boy was I wrong!

I found out just how good Troy played the game. He always seemed to shine when the game was on the line.

Congratulations, Troy.

Your friend, *Steve Floyd*

## **The Board Talk**

**George & Donna Wilber, Publishers**

**1984 — 2000**

**503 E. Sheridan Rd., Lansing, MI 48906**

**To: The California Shuffleboard  
Hall of Fame Committee**

**Re: Induction of Troy Tolbert**

George first met three-finger Troy while he was a guest of Al and Von Stewart.

Al took George to his favorite shuffleboard site. They played Troy and his partner, and George remembers: "Troy beat me—with the two fingers that weren't there!"

We next ran into Troy at the First Arizona Open where he reinforced our image of him as a great player and a fine gentleman.

While he never made a lot of noise, he always made his preference known.

We believe Troy is well-deserving of induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

*George and Donna Wilber*

### More from Troy's Friends . . .

Ladies and gentlemen and all those who love and play Shuffleboard around the country, I would like to announce the next player to be inducted into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame—Troy Tolbert.

He is a man that is truly deserving and I'm sure you all will agree. He has played everywhere that the action is, and plays everyone that will play him. He is a serious player and loves the game and has contributed much of his life to this highly skilled game.

Troy is from Oklahoma and California, but now resides in Bullhead City. His hand was injured in a construction accident, but he developed a game second to none. He can play better shuffleboard than anyone with two hands.

Let's give Troy Tolbert a big hand. He's one of the true greats of the Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. He will join such players as Texas Billy Mayes, Bill Melton, and Don Rod Cameron, and others.

— *"Humdinger" Jerry Harp*

Troy always played long and strong!

—*Jack Ahern*

Congratulations from one Hall of Famer to another!

—*Balboa Ron Schweikert*

### More from Troy's Friends . . .

The thing I liked best about Troy was his witty sense of humor. He's always happy-go-lucky and always joking. He should've taken his comedy act on the road instead of his shuffleboard game—he would have made more money.

Not that Troy was a bad player—far from it. He was good and had a talent for rising to the occasion when needed.

Congratulations, Troy, on your nomination to the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

—*Tommy Galvin, Omaha, Nebraska*

I have known Troy for over 30 years as a friend and one helluva player.

Troy and Greyhound Jim McDonald would come and get me and we would go play Shuffleboard.

At Chino, Troy and I would break up the house at the Dixie Inn.

At Sally's bar in Pomona, and we played all the shuffleboarders who came in from Texas and Oklahoma.

Troy has always been a great gambler, as anyone who lost money to him can testify. He's a beauty, and I love him like a brother.

Troy, this induction is what you get for being so damn good!

—*"Mexican" Tommy Workman*

### More from Troy's friends . . .

Congratulations, Troy Tolbert on your induction into the California Hall of Fame.

I always enjoyed playing a game of Shuffleboard with you as a partner, or as an opponent. You always played your heart out to win, regardless of the outcome.

Looking back in time, when all of us players discussed playing those tough games with one another for money or prestige, your name always came up.

It was always a pleasure and a source of pride to have been there with you.

Again, welcome to our Circle of Champions, of which you are one.

—George P. Lucas  
*a legend at 82 and growing*

What can I say?

Troy not only taught me a lot about the game—he beat my brains out and picked my pocket at the same time! Shuffleboard lessons aren't free with Troy—but who expected a free lunch?

It's always fun to be around when Troy's in action. He's one of the most colorful and skilled players on the scene, a well deserved choice for the California Hall of Fame.

Congratulations, Troy!

—John McGinnis

### *Troy's Friends speak up:*

The first time I met three-finger Troy, I felt sorry for him.

That soon changed by the end of the night. He busted me, but good. I never won a game. I told him, "If you ever lose that other hand, come on back and see me."

He just looked at me with a big grin.

So, from that day forward, he called me Low Ball Larry. He sure earned my respect.

In my book, he's already a Hall of Famer.

Thanks for all the lessons, Troy.

Congratulations and God Bless.

*—Larry Newell*

Troy Tolbert is one of the best players in California. His record of winning tournaments in Santa Clara is one of the things that has put him into the Hall of Fame.

When Brawley was the hot spot of the nation for the big money action, the best players in the world played there, and Troy was the only one to win on a steady basis.

Troy's 40+ years as a top player makes him a Hall of Famer. I'm very happy to see one more "road player" inducted into the Hall of Fame.

*—Porter White*

P.S. Thank you Troy for being my friend and sending me money all over the country when I was a road player.

## ***Troy's Friends have the Last Word***

Troy is the original trash talker, but he was always able to back up every word.

His ability to create action is truly an art form.

One of the most fearless clutch ladders I've seen anywhere, Troy's gambling prowess, storytelling and just plain talent have combined to make him a unique character in this game.

It has been my pleasure to travel and to play with Troy and I congratulate him on this most deserved honor.

*—Billy Maxwell*

I first met Troy in the mid 1980's and I have never met another person that could match his amazing left handed shot from the rail.

He is truly a gifted person in many ways and has earned the right to receive his place in the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Congratulations, Troy!

*—Jim Martin*