

Jean Ayers-Mays National TSA HOF Inductee

December 26, 2001

The Table Shuffleboard Association's Board of Directors and the shuffleboard community, friends, and family proudly present the TSA Shuffleboard Hall of Fame Award to Jean Ayers-Mays (posthumously) on this 26nd day of December 2001!

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Table Shuffleboard Association, Inc.

Jean Ayers-Mays

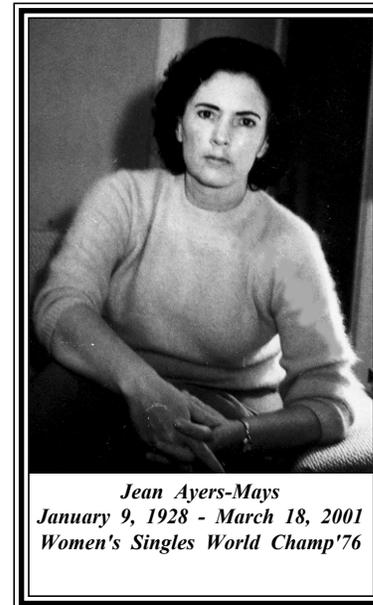
1928-2001

Table Shuffleboard Association

Hall of Fame Induction

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Houston Holiday Open 2001, Houston, TX



Jean Ayers-Mays, born January 9, 1928, was raised in California. She was one of the best lady players of her era (along with other highly skilled lady players such as Ruthie Miles and Millie Duarte). These ladies could compete well with any players - man or woman.

She first met Billy Mays at a tournament in California and she often traveled town to town, state to state, with him for approximately 15 years - playing with and against the best of the great players during the 60' and 70's. During these traveling days, she and Billy used to perform many shuffleboard Exhibition Shows and she was also a great trick shot shooter. Jean used to ride a Harley 74 and once managed the Oasis, a club in San Bernardino, California. From 1960 through 1964 when Billy was reportedly averaging 100,000 miles and three or four used cars a year, Jean often accompanied him. They played in most every state and said that California had the most action, Virginia the least. During this timeframe, Jean was regarded as one of the best women players in the country and superior to 98% of the men players.

Wed.
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Jean Ayers-Mays

Jean Ayers-Mays TSA HOF (con't.)

Jean says of Billy: "If he can't outshoot you, he'll outtalk you. He loves to play so much that he'll actually lose money just to play - he'll spot himself out."

Jean and Billy would often team up to play partners or doubles.

They played head-to-head once and Jean won.

Their shuffleboard travels slowed when Elred Wayne, Billy's 9 year old son, died of leukemia in 1964 -- Jean and Billy quit traveling for several years during and after this tragedy. Jean was working a night job printing color film for Econo-Color and Billy was working at his shop in Mesquite, Texas, where he sold and serviced shuffleboards for the National Shuffleboard Company (when he wasn't at the Silver Seven). But, they would still go over about once per week to the Silver Seven (out by Love Field Airport) to stay in practice just in case any road boys came to town. On the road Billy and Jean liked hitting the small towns. According to the hustler legend, the hustler is supposed to let the fish win a few games before jacking up and busting him, but Jean and Billy did not see it that way. They figured "If you let them get your money, you might never get it back..."

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"... and if you can't beat the best in town you might as well not go on the road." Jean said of Billy, "He'll play for \$100 a game and come out one ahead just so he can have the pure glory of the game. And all those fishes there for \$10 and \$20 and he can't lose."

She said that "Billy's ego won't let him play safe. It's lost him a few games. That's why many of the players won't play partners with him. He likes to be a showoff. It takes two to win and two to lose, but Billy wants to be the hero and win all the games."

At a time when Billy claimed he had \$100,000 in bad checks collected from his winnings, Jean said that she "don't play against paper. I don't like no paper and I don't give no paper. The last one I had was for \$400, and I sold it for \$50. I can show you a stack of checks that won't quit." In many of their travels, Jean oftentimes spent her time holding and protecting the purse (winnings) as much or more than actually playing. A good example of this one was when they left for Los Angeles two days after Billy and Bill Melton of Davis, Oklahoma had taken second place in doubles on Billy's promoted "First Official World's Shuffleboard Tournament, \$1,000 Guaranteed" at the Moose Lodge 1818 (a store front in Dallas, TX).



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Jean Ayers-May TSA HOF (con't.)

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Jean & Billy flew from Dallas to Los Angeles, rented a car and drove to the Islander bar in Garden Grove, California (where they heard there was some shuffleboard action) which had a blowfish for light fixtures and "Kanes" and "Wahines" on the restroom doors. As it turned out there was no action there. So, they called around and learned from the Dixie Tavern in Chino that the action was taking place at J.D.'s Hi-Spot in Rubidoux. Reportedly, the reason the action moved around was because a certain player may lose a lot of money at one particular spot, so then they move around. All they had to do was find one good player and learn where the current hot spot for action was - and they gathered up their weights and joined the action! They took a room in Riverside, which is near Rubidoux, and drove out to J.D.'s Hi-Spot, reportedly a gabled beer bar that sat on a desolate stretch of Mission Highway where they played for a couple days with Tommy Galvin of Cacamonga (age 24 at the time) until all the players got to the town to play. So, Jean, Billy and Tommy drove over to the Jolly Jug in Montclair, a cocktail lounge with spangles on the ceiling looking like stars and with a brown doll made out of chlorine jar atop the piano bar.

Jonsey was there and they played. After Jonsey went home, the threesome took off for The Barn in Costa Mesa, which had a sign on the wall reading "APPEARING NIGHTLY THE COSTA MESA POLICE DEPARTMENT." At 2 am, Jean laid down on three bar stools and tried to sleep. All the lights were out except those illuminating the shuffleboard, the Bowler and the cigarette machine. When they finally left The Barn, Billy was still trying to get A.Z. and Jack to play for \$100 an end. The next night it was back to J.D.'s Hi-Spot, shoelaces and purse a dragging!

There Eddie Contreras was waiting on them and said "I want all that Texas money before it gets out of town."

This is just an example of the many extended trips Jean and Billy made playing around the country with the best. Jean was always encouraging new players and giving them tips on how they might hold their weight differently or teaching them different shots to improve their game. Evelyn Harris (Billy's sister) says Jean taught her how to hold a weight and play. Larry Creakbaum and many others can give you similar stories about Jean's skill and coaching. Jean was a skilled sportsman and is greatly missed by the many who knew her!