

2000 Hall of Fame Inductee Leroy Garzonio – Aurora

Leroy Garzonio started his officiating career over 50 years ago. He began officiating in Illinois in 1948. He married Josephine Campeggio in 1951, and she knew that it was a part of the marriage vows to accept officiating sports as part of their life style. Leroy was stationed in the service in Germany and Korea, but still kept up his avocation. He later returned to the states and was registered in Michigan, Illinois, Missouri and Colorado where he resided since 1975.

In Aurora, Leroy officiated in the sports of football, basketball, baseball and softball, both at the high school level and with the Aurora Parks & Recreation Department. Whenever asked to do a game at any level, he would never turn it down. His dedication to sports was overwhelming in that he attended all meetings for officials and never made excuses for his schedules. All assignors knew him well, and would call on him for makeup games. He even had his equipment stolen from his car, but managed to borrow equipment from other officials to do the games.

Leroy was well liked by all, and was more than willing to help younger officials with rules and interpretations. He was honored by the Parks & Recreation Department of Aurora for his outstanding service, and received the Pioneer Award in Football in 1999 from the Colorado Football Officials Association.

When Leroy wasn't officiating, he was in his boat on the water fishing. He always told his wife, Jo, that he would return when the fish stopped biting, sometimes not returning home until the night hours. Jo said she guessed he had another ball game, and that was just an excuse to stay outside.

Leroy worked his last ball game in the fall of 1998, and passed away on Dec. 14, 1999, in Aurora, Colorado after a lengthy illness at the age of 83 years. He will be remembered as an official who "after he was made, they threw away the mold." But now we feel that in Heaven, God has his pitchers, catchers, infielders, outfielders and his sports fans. Now God's team is complete: He has his umpire! Leroy Garzonio, both as an official and human being, will be missed.