

We plan to crown our 35 years with a glorious weekend, Nov. 8-9, featuring Jane Farwell and Dick Crum. Join us!



Michael Solomon was born in Beirut, Lebanon and came to Dayton, Ohio with his parents as an infant. In 1929 he became a clerical worker with Dayton's Recreation Dept. and then director of special activities. He was a VILTIS subscriber for 30 years until his death March 9, 1985 at age 82. (Wallace Martin portrait)

WHO WAS MICHAEL SOLOMON?

By Grace Wolff

Just about all of us have danced at Solomon Pavilion, and most of us dance there regularly. But how many of us know the quiet, gracious man whose dedicated service to recreational dance in the Miami Valley prompted dancers, in Nov. 1964, to give our incomparable dance facility his name? Although a ramshackle structure in the '50s when we danced there only in summer, it had an excellent floor. When it was doomed for demolition, the dancers petitioned the city to reconsider, and the reconstructed building is what we are enjoying today. Some of us remember the day of its dedication.

In February 1950, Mike and his wife Margaret were my first dance teachers. It was a class intended for group leaders who were supposed to know dance. Mike was simply planning to teach us some dances and give us hints about teaching. To begin with, there were about six men and sixty women! Very few could dance, but that didn't stop Mike.

He put painters' hats on women "who would be men" and away we went with Lili Marlene, Patti Cake Polka, Waltz of the Bells, Cotton-eyed Joe, and Jessie Polka. It was a great six weeks, and out of it emerged the first square dance class. "Don't come without a partner of the opposite sex," Mike cautioned, and all of us obeyed. In that first square dance class we learned to polka, schottische, waltz

and square dance, and at the end of the year we became the Dayton Square Dance Club, dancing every other Friday evening.

How could he do it? After a number of journalistic and clerical jobs, Mike became director of special activities for the Dayton Division of Recreation. In 1947 the Solomons' new neighbors from California introduced them to international folk dancing, and that was the beginning of our recreational dance program. The city recreation centers were ideal for teaching and dancing. Also, Mike was an astute student. He pored over the Lloyd Shaw books and worked with nationally-known callers of the period. Dance was only one of his "special activities" for the city, but it was his joy.

He brought good callers to Dayton for workshops. He began a round dance class after the square dancing was established, and, wisely, sought out prospective callers and teachers to take over classes and groups as they began to multiply. He prepared teachers by having them first assist him, and he had sessions for callers where they practiced under his direction. But the guiding force was always Michael Solomon. Michael Solomon Pavilion is the symbol proclaiming his greatest service to the most people. As we dance into the future, we shall always remember him with joy.



MIAMI VALLEY FOLK DANCERS DAYTON, OHIO

*Celebrate thirty-five years
with*

JANE FARWELL

&

DICK CRUM

(barring unforeseen job commitments)

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All folk dancers welcome on Thursdays 7-11
and 2nd Sundays 2:30 - 7.

Varied Ethnic Emphasis. Call for locations.