

## North Dakota's Mielke inducted into United States Curling Association Hall of Fame

Jon Mielke (Bismarck, N.D.) is the 40th individual and fourth from North Dakota to be inducted into the United States Curling Association (USCA) Hall of Fame.

Nominees can be nominated in three key areas: builder, curler and curler/builder. The USCA Hall of Fame defines a builder of the sport as an individual who has made a major contribution toward the promotion, development and advancement of curling in the United States. Mielke's nomination was put forth to the USCA for consideration by the North Dakota Curling Association. Mielke's induction in the builder category was approved by the USCA Board of Directors at the recent fall board meeting in Bloomington, Minn. Mielke's induction ceremony is tentatively scheduled to take place during the 2014 U.S. Olympic Team Trials for Curling, set for Nov. 10-17, 2013, in Fargo, N.D.

"The people on the Hall of Fame selection committee are pillars of the sport of curling. For them, and the USCA's board of directors, to consider my contributions noteworthy and to include me with the legends that are already in the Hall of Fame, is truly an honor," Mielke said.

Mielke, 60, curls at the Capital Curling Club in Bismarck, N.D. His lengthy list of contributions to the sport of curling includes stints on the USCA Board of Directors, North Dakota Board of Directors, Capital Curling Club Board of Directors, as well as Minot Curling Club's board.

"Curling has meant a great deal to me and my family," said Mielke. "It has provided us with opportunities to do things and go places that we never imagined. It has also helped us make lifelong friends across the country and around the world. I owe it to the sport to give something back and hopefully to inspire others to become equally involved."

Mielke was raised in Grafton, N.D., and began curling in 1973 when he took a physical education class at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. After that he curled in Grafton for a year and spent three years curling in Minot. He then moved to Bismarck, which at the time did not have a curling club. He was one of the founding members of the Capital Curling Club four years later (1982).

Mielke is a USCA Level III instructor and Level III coach and has collaborated on USCA instructional camps and clinics for the past two decades. He also is a contributing columnist on training topics for the *U.S. Curling News*.

He has served on the organizing committee for multiple national championship and world championship events, including chairing the 2002 Men's and Women's World Curling Championships and 2002 World Senior Curling Championships. Most recently he served as the USCA's liaison to the Grand Forks Organizing Committee for the 2008 World Men's Curling Championship. He also served as Team USA's official team leader in Grand Forks, a role he also held in 2007 for the Men's World Championship in Edmonton, Alberta.

As a competitor, Mielke won the 1997 North Dakota Men's State Curling Championship and represented his region at the 1997 U.S. National Championships. Mielke has also competed at multiple North Dakota mixed championships, the U.S. Senior National Championships (runner-up in 2004) and has coached at Junior Nationals as well as the Men's and Women's National Championships. He was selected to participate in the recent Scot Tour that reclaimed the coveted Herries-Maxwell Trophy.

“Being named to the Hall of Fame and being selected to be a member of the Scots Tour are actually quite similar - both recognize past contributions to the sport. Both were an extreme honor. That being said, nothing can top being named to the Hall of Fame - perhaps because it is more lasting and represents an acknowledgement by the USCA's Board of Directors,” Mielke said.

Mielke points to the 2012 Scot Tour Team and his 1997 North Dakota men's titles as his on-ice highlights as well as “seeing the excitement and appreciation of beginning, intermediate, junior curlers, and instructor trainees after they have completed a clinic or camp that I was helping instruct.” His highlights off the ice include watching his son's team win the 2006 U.S. Junior Men's National Curling Championship, in addition to “making curling friends from all over the country and around the world.”

Mielke is employed as a transportation researcher with the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, which is based at North Dakota State University in Fargo. The Institute also has an office in Bismarck, where Mielke works.

Mielke and his wife, Carol, have two adult children. They have also fostered 31 children and were named North Dakota Foster Parents of the Year in 2006. “Some are only for a day or two, but we have had nine that were long-term, ranging from 3 to 34 months,” Mielke said. “They become part of our family; we cry when they leave us, and we never stop praying for them.”

The first inductee into the USCA Hall of Fame was named in 1984. Mielke is the 40th individual (two teams also have been inducted) and fourth from North Dakota. To see the complete list of HOF members, go to <http://bit.ly/RXUIOe>.

Nominations for the USCA Hall of Fame are accepted annually, with June 1, 2013, marking the next deadline for submissions.

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For more information: Terry Kolesar, USA Curling, [terry.kolesar@usacurl.org](mailto:terry.kolesar@usacurl.org), 715-344-1199, Ext. 202, or 608-338-9900 (cell).