

IF Person of the Year - 2010

Continued

Gene put his legal education to work for the pigeon sport when he was elected president of the Avian Assistance Council, a group of attorney pigeon members who met annually, with funding from the AU and IF, to discuss legal issues affecting pigeon flyers. For several years Gene assisted flyers facing neighbor disputes and ordinance problems. Gene was also asked to serve on the AU Drug Task Force to investigate drugging of pigeons and participated in writing a protocol for testing pigeons.

In 1992 Gene was giving advice to a young couple trying to start a pigeon magazine called "The Pigeon Shopper." It piqued his interest in returning to publishing. He had previously written to Thelma Snyder of the News and John Roberts of the Bulletin letting them know that if they considered selling their publications that he was interested. But that was before he went to law school. The Shopper didn't last long and the owners tried to sell it to Gene. Gene's wife, Melody, his high school sweetheart who had long known of his dream of publishing a pigeon journal, gave him the green light. For one dollar, Gene took over the subscriber list and created a completely new magazine, the Racing Pigeon Digest, though the first few issues stated that it was "formerly the Pigeon Shopper." This was done as a face saving jester to the Shopper owners. Gene and Melody worked on the Digest after their "day" jobs. The Digest flourished and today is the only racing pigeon magazine published in the US. Gene is the author of several articles of some of America's most outstanding pigeon flyers, but also uses his column to discuss issues of importance to the sport at large.

Besides his pigeon flying and magazine publishing career, Gene is a historian and author of "The German Coast of Louisiana," a local history of his county. He also authored an annotated bibliography of Louisiana books used by Louisiana libraries during the 1970s in developing their Louisiana collections. In 1977, the Louisiana Press Association awarded him the "Community Service Award," its highest honor for several newspaper articles investigating political corruption in his locality. In the past few years, Gene has written often about the American Homing Pigeon Institute's World of Wing museum, which was funded, in part, by contributions of IF members. By researching the history of the project and providing a critical analysis of its operations over two decades, Gene has raised important questions concerning the museum's mission progress, and its placement in Oklahoma City, inaccessible for the vast majority of American pigeon flyers, as well as being not located in a significant USA vacation destination point thereby limiting the presentation of the hobby to the general public. Not only has Gene provided a reasoned and logical discussion of the problems of the museum, he also offered solutions, including the relocation of the museum to a location more accessible to the pigeon fraternity and general public.

Gene and Melody are the parents of five sons, grandparents of three with two more expected in December and January. •



Gene Yoes loft, Lake Charles, Louisiana



Gene and Melody Yoes