

Roger Lyons Introduces Jon Broderick

I have the honor of introducing our first inductee - Jon Broderick - a former Clark Laker who now resides in Georgia. Jon is an accomplished show-skier who has left his mark on the sport in many ways.

Jon is here today with his wife, Maria, his life partner of more than 23-years... Also joining us for today's ceremony is his daughter, Carolina Sevilla - who skied for many years with the Miami Ski Club - her husband David... and attending is Jon's niece and nephew Shannon and Doug, daughter and son-in-law of his late twin brother, Tom, and his wife, Kathy.

Waterskiing is a sport, developed shortly after WWII. The young men of this era were not satisfied going to the lake and swimming. The war had provided them with the need and wants for thrills and excitement.

This enthusiasm for water skiing started with Jon and his twin brother Tom removing the outhouse door and turning it into a surfboard. Creating some excitement pulling the door behind a 3-1/2 HP fishing boat.

The boys entertained the neighborhood at the lake with their antics and even provided lessons for water enjoyment to the guests at the local hotel.

News of their skiing antics got around the area like a fire, and soon the visitors came. Dave Thompson and Bob Herman came and brought credentials of being AWSA members. They were AWSA judges and skiers they brought advice and helped to develop tricks and entertainment for those watching on the shore.

This not only promoted water skiing as a spectator sport but helped to allow ALL to participate.

It wasn't long before Jon and his neighbors were putting on a own show for all at Clarklake. Those early days of skiing on the pristine waters of Clark Lake with his followers helped him to form the Pine Riders Water Ski Club. Jon has been a true pioneer in the sport of water skiing, and his contributions are endless.

The dedication to this newfound adventure found those on the lake becoming so involved and entrenched with the sport that the ski club began to flourish and grow.

Jon was the driving force in this group. With the specifications provided by the AWSA, Jon built a Ski Jump. This additional equipment created a new adventure and heights for some in the group. This jump enhanced the tricks of those who wanted to entertain.

Jon's passion for the sport rubbed off on many skiers with much talent. The list of those he touched and inspired is long and distinguished. Rob Shirley, Skip Gilkerson to name a few. Those local skiers he inspired were Lynn Vermeulen, Gary Krupa, Tony Krupa, and Kay Vermeulen Nichols. Their selection to this Hall is a direct result of the enthusiasm and passion of Jon.

As I stand here and think about the impact Jon has had on this sport, I can't help but think of my own youth growing up on the water.

I'm a 70-year resident of Clark Lake. I can remember many mornings sitting on my dock at the end of the slalom course. Those sounds of a Chris-Craft, Correct Craft, and a few times Mercury outboard coming through the fog.

Summer fun, waiting to watch those dedicated skiers cutting through the calm water and creating that "Big Spray" – this was a show of sorts to those watching from the shore.

Waterskiing at Clarklake became the rage, as it did at many lakes. The local lakes, Devils Lake, Wolf Lake and Grass Lake. These lakes were the foundation for the sport and this foundation produced relationships between the skiers that have lasted a lifetime. Those skiers and families from Clarklake now became the face of the Pine Riders Water Ski Club.

Ski Shows and Ski Tournaments, now became lake wide festival.

These tournaments were sponsored by the Jackson Citizen Patriot and attended by many from far and wide. Just to name a few attendees, Jimmy "The Flea" Jackson, Warren Wetherell from New York and Ricky McCormick from Missouri. It sure made an impression on those that participated.

Watching a newsreel of Cypress Gardens founder Dick Pope, who was also known as "Mr. Waterskiing", flying a kite on water skis, Jon's, "I can do that attitude" kicked in. He came home and with the help of a neighbor he replicated the kite and flew it over Clark Lake adding to his "Mystic".

The local paper captured that moment and soon Jon received a call from Dick Pope himself inviting him to join the show at Cypress Gardens. Jon went on to perform tricks like that in front of millions of people during his two-year stint there.

Jon's enthusiasm for the sport didn't stop there.

That flight on waterskies may have done more for the sport than you realize. All water skiers will tell you that success is best when practice is accomplished early in the morning.

This provides ideal conditions, no wind with minimal boat traffic.

Michigan is a "Sportsman State". Hunting and Fishing abound. Some found waterskiing to be an obstacle for those that enjoyed those same morning conditions, the FISHERMAN.

The newly formed Michigan Water Ski Association had found that the state legislature was considering a bill to limit water skiing to a few days a week with restricted hours.

This was not welcome news to the MWSA - and they needed a WOW factor to bring attention to the popularity of the sport. So, who did they call? The guy who can fly a kite on water skis.

The annual Detroit Boat Show, held in February provided just what the MWSA required. Despite it being a cold, dreary February day, Jon agreed to help promote the sport.

February weather, not being August, Jon donned a wetsuit and flew his kite over the Detroit River during the show. One man's success becomes another man's failure.

The proposed law to limit the sport of waterskiing never off the dock.

So, to this day, by law, water skiing is allowed 1 hour before sunrise and continues until one hour after sunset. Life jackets for the skiers must be on the boat and a permit could be obtained allowing you to ski without an observer.

So, flying a kite on the Detroit River does get some attention.

All of you here today, agree that the common denominator in this story is the need for a boat. Jon took show skiing to a level where a boat is no longer required.

Indiana Beach needed a water ski show but the speed limit on the water, by law, was 5mph. BOAT, you say, Jon came up with an idea. A 1949 Chevy mounted on its side to a 40 x 40 raft, looked to work. Attaching a pole to the exposed wheel. This looked like a grounded helicopter.

The equipment was refined over the years and this contraption performed over 6,000 shows at 4 different locations. He last worked on this idea in a 120 ft. dia. pond at Cape Coral, one of his last stops.

Another notable achievement as a water ski pioneer is Jon's work as an author, having written numerous books about show water skiing and those involved in the sport. His expertise and passion for the sport have helped inspire countless others to take up the skis.

His show-skiing exploits at Cypress Gardens took him across the country, developing shows for tourists in Indiana, Sarasota, Ft. Myers, even the Bahamas.

Jon's induction to this hall now increases the membership from Clark Lake to five. A testament to the incredible talent, skill, and dedication of those he touched.

It's truly remarkable to see someone who has accomplished so much in their career yet remains humble and dedicated to their craft.

Jon is not only a legend in the world of show water skiing, but also an inspiration to all of us who strive to achieve greatness in our own endeavors.

Jon is a true skier from the state of Michigan.

So, let's give a round of applause to Jon Broderick, a true master of his craft and an icon in the world of water skiing.

Thank you for all your incredible contributions to sport, for inspiring us all, and congratulations on your induction into the Michigan Water Ski Hall of Fame!