

Jerry Smith Becomes Third Inductee to the Alaska Table Tennis Hall of Fame

“For his contribution to the sport, sportsmanship, and love of the Game.”



On July 25, 2009, **Jerry Smith** became the third Alaskan to be honored as an inductee in the **Alaska Table Tennis Hall of Fame**. Jerry was an ambassador for table tennis. His passion for the game was obvious to everyone who knew him. Even his first conversation

with a new person, some how moved around to “Do you play table tennis?” Whether the answer was “yes” or “no” it really didn’t matter, because it was followed up with an invitation to come and play a game with him.

As a college student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1973, Jerry started playing in the dorms. Every year his love of the game continued. By the time fatherhood rolled around he was playing in his basement, where he taught his three children, John, Doug, and Becky the game basics.

In 2006 Jerry saw a TV news sports report about a local table tennis tournament that was sponsored by the Fairbanks Interior Table Tennis Club. Jerry made a phone call to the President and instantly became a member. At FITT he made many friends who shared his love of the game and found a place to invite everyone he knew to come and play. Of course, his sons, John and Doug came to play, as well as his daughter, Becky and wife, Janet. His parents shared an afternoon at the

club, while visiting from Kansas. People came from Jerry's Church and from meeting him somewhere in town. His outgoing friendship was a magnet, drawing many to a game full of laughter and fun.

When Jerry heard that Jamo and Jane Parrish were upgrading their tables, Jerry jumped on the opportunity to move the tables to his Church. Many fun rallies have been held at his Church over the years.



Jerry was eager to help others enjoy table tennis and was not shy about pitching in with the extra work to hold tournaments. As Vice President of FITT, Jerry was the Co-Director of the first international tournament held by FITT, the Alaska-Yukon Challenge. Jerry helped set up the format for the competition, kept the tournament on time, as well as organized the table layout. He volunteered to move two tables from Wood Center to the Patty Gym late in the evening before closing as well as returning them by 7:00 am Monday morning at subzero weather. You could always count on Jerry to get a job done on time and without any damage.

For more on how his life connected to his table tennis friends, check out. <http://fitt-club.net/jerry.pdf> on the FITT Website.

Unfortunately, Jerry passed away February 26, 2009 from pancreatic complications. We miss him dearly.

In memory of Jerry Smith's contribution to Table Tennis, FITT has started a "*Jerry Smith Spirit of the Game*" award to recognize a player who has demonstrated Sportsmanship, Fair Play, and Love of the Game. To find out more go to: <http://fitt-club.net/jaward.pdf>



His wife, Janet, received his recognition plaque for the Hall of Fame from Boyd Bennett. Boyd was the first member of the Alaska Table Tennis Hall of Fame.