

3-wall stalwart Miller captures Kendler Award

By Dave Revenaugh

The Kendler Award is presented to those individuals who demonstrate extraordinary service at a regional level to handball, and George Miller is a most deserving recipient.

His unselfish commitment, dedication and passion for handball have been a life-long endeavor. A love affair, even.

George is soft-spoken and a man of few but measured words. He has always allowed his actions to do his talking.

George's passion for the game was instilled by his parents: George Sr., who was a great player and memorable coach in his own right, and Marie, who was his biggest fan. George began playing handball in 1958, when he was 18. He won his first city singles championship in 1961.

As a player, his stats speak for themselves:

- Eighteen consecutive city singles championships.
- Twenty-four city doubles titles.
- More than 30 state championships.
- More than 60 regional tournament titles.
- Ten national three-wall doubles crowns.
- One national four-wall singles title.

One of the feats George is most proud of has been his ability (some would say durability) to win at least one open championship in each of the last four decades.

His dad's coaching rubbed off on George. To spread the good news about



Whether playing or working, Miller is a constant presence on the Toledo courts.

handball, he talked a few of the veteran Toledo players into putting on free handball clinics all over the area. They went into Adrian and Monroe, in Michigan, and onto the campuses of the University of Toledo and Bowling Green State.

George was the driving force behind the construction of the eight courts at the Lucas County Recreation Center. After many years of unsuccessful attempts by various groups to build the courts, George led a committee that convinced the county commissioners to allocate the money needed to build the facility. He sold the commissioners on the idea he could bring the national three-wall championships to Toledo every five years or so. He got the tournament but he missed a bit on the "every five years or so."

This was the 30th consecutive year the tournament has been hosted by the Toledo

Handball Club. And for 30 years George Miller has been the catalyst behind what many people regard as the best tournament of the year.

George works countless hours, even takes his vacation time, to coincide with the tournament. All to help make this tournament what everyone enjoys over Labor Day.

George will be the first to admit that he doesn't do it alone. The group of guys that are the Toledo Handball Club are the best. But we all know that George Miller is the guy who makes it happen.

For 30 years he has been one of the first here in the morning and last to leave at night. He can be seen changing Gatorade buckets, emptying trash, shucking corn, sweeping wet courts—anything and everything that will make this tournament a success and make you want to return next year.

Roberts: Miller's 'leadership' vital to 3-wall's success



Miller is honored by Roberts in Toledo.

Here is what USHA executive director Vern Roberts had to say about George Miller:

"In 1975, George Miller and the Toledo Fives Handball Club came together with the Lucas County Rec Center and the City of Maumee to build the best three-wall facility in the country.

"Building on the success of the eight-court facility, the event has been growing in numbers and stature ever since.

"Each year, George raises the ante when

it comes to running a first-class event.

"First it meant adding concrete aprons to keep mud off the courts. Then it was lights on four courts. Later, lights were added to all the courts. Then new floors were installed. When it rains, the committee grabs leaf blowers, torches, heaters, whatever it takes to resume play.

"Most clubs are hard-pressed to bid on hosting one nationals, but George's leadership has Toledo Fives growing stronger every year."