

ROGER CAMPBELL

Jousting originated in Europe centuries ago, with sometimes deadly results. The American version dates from the early 1800s in the Mid-Atlantic, involving much pageantry and grandeur, as well as intense competition among riders. The original use of the term “tournament” started with jousting, and has later been adopted by other sports for their series of competitions.



Roger Campbell was born into a riding family, as the oldest among ten children of Junior (“Cowboy”) and Rachel Campbell. His father started teaching Roger, who began competing in Monroe as a nine-year-old. Roger credits his father and Don Floyd, Hall of Famer and original “Amherst Lancer”, with preparing him to join the men in the competitions, an experience that matured him quickly. As a natural lefthander, he had to learn which way to handle the lance, and soon realized the most practical approach would be as a righthander. There were no divisions for levels of experience, so he “put on his boots and rode with the men”, on his horse “Penny”. There are now classes of competition – novice, amateur, semi-professional, and professional – allowing competitors to progress as their skills improve.

His brother Mike soon joined him, and they rode in regional tournaments. His father continued to teach the entire family, emphasizing not only the skills of competition, but also the history of the sport and meaning of being a sportsman. Family members worked together to share their successes, their losses, and their lances. What really hooked him was his first appearance at the National Jousting Tournament in Washington, D.C.

Roger has now been participating in jousting for more than fifty years. During that time, he has won numerous championships at the state and national levels. He was inducted in 1985 into the National Jousting Hall of Fame, as “Knight of Ponderosa II”, one year after his father’s induction, and is joined there by more than 30 other Amherst County residents with that designation, his mother among them as a non-rider. He has also been active in helping to start jousting clubs throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and enjoys introducing the sport to anyone who shows interest.

Jousting is very much a family activity, as shown by the Campbell family, who boast competitors among his brothers, children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. He credits his family, and especially his wife, Sylvia, with support throughout his many tournaments.

Roger Dale Campbell – June 13, 1953

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Local: Amherst County area jousting tournaments; Amherst County High School baseball (pitcher, 1969-71)
- State: Virginia State Jousting Tournament, Richmond; State Tournament Longwood College; Virginia State Championship (13); helped start jousting clubs throughout Virginia; Virginia Jousting Association President
- National: National Jousting Hall of Fame (1985); National Hall of Fame Tournament champion (3); Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, South Carolina State Tournaments; National Jousting Championship, Washington, D.C.; first winner, National Pro Class Tournament; National Jousting Tournament, champion (5); National Jousting Association President