



Dick & Elyse Stoner

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Perhaps no individuals have had as great an impact on the success of the PITA over the last 25 years as Dick and Elyse Stoner. They served in the Secretary's position for over 15 years and their efforts were a large part of the reason the PITA was able to transform itself into an organization guided by an Executive Committee and become more responsive to membership wishes.

Along the way, the Stoners were also able to make the transition at the PITA office from an operation where everything was still done by hand to the use of computers for much of the work. This was no easy task with the equipment and knowledge available in the mid-1970's. Both Dick and Elyse had to learn how to program and operate the equipment. Since they had been hired late in the shooting year, the first year on the job was especially difficult since they only had a short time to relocate the PITA records, supplies and equipment from Oregon to their home in Washington. At the same time, they had to maintain the records as information continued to flow in, figure



averages, issue membership cards for the coming year, and gather and prepare the information necessary for the upcoming yearbook. All of these operations were still done by hand.

Dick and Elyse both gave up successful businesses and dedicated all of their efforts to PITA during the fifteen years they served the association. The office opened when they awoke each morning and closed when they retired at night, seven days a week. When they were able to get away from the office, arrangements were made for someone to answer phone calls. Things important to shooters (yardage reductions, questions, and information) were taken care of quickly either by phone, mail or face-to-face at the many shoots the Stoners attended and worked for the PITA. They were both strong promoters and ambassadors for the association in everything they did and wherever they went.

Two major areas where their efforts improved the association immediately were the yearbook and the Grand Pacific. They rapidly changed the yearbook from a small, stapled set of pages of averages to a larger bound book with more pages, pictures and information for members. Elyse took on the job of designing, layout, collecting information and editing the yearbook. Major changes also took place with the covers and the yearbook became an eagerly anticipated event each year. Over time, the yearbook became a bigger and bigger job. Their first yearbook (#43 – 1976) was 166 pages and their last (#57 – 1990) was 316 pages.

Dick did not shoot at the Grand Pacific while he was Secretary, involving himself in almost every part of the operation to ensure a smooth running shoot. He was always available for decisions, advice, or information and seemed to be everywhere. For many years, he was the “Face of the PITA” for hundred of shooters. Elyse purchased the trophies for the Grand Pacific, awarded them to the winners, and made sure each winner had their picture taken. She was also constantly taking pictures at the Grand Pacific and other shoots for the yearbook and her large “Down the Line” photo album, which she displayed each year at the Grand Pacific. It was a very popular feature and allowed many shooters to see what had occurred during the past shooting year. Dick and Elyse were proud to have served the PITA under ten different Presidents and the many other individuals who made up the Executive Committee during those years.

Both Dick and Elyse sacrificed much of their own shooting careers to the job. Even when they were able to shoot there were constant distractions. Dick took up registered shooting in 1949 and while a Senior at the University of Washington in 1953, captured the doubles, HAA and HOA championships at the Washington State Shoot. In 1965, he won the Washington Preliminary Handicap with a lone 98 and in 1976 he tied for the state handicap championship. Dick achieved the 200,000 milestone with the PITA while racking up good scores and wins from Canada throughout the West.

Elyse was a PITA All-Star for four consecutive years from 1964 through 1967. She was the Washington state ladies singles champion in 1965 and ladies handicap champion in 1967. She also won ladies trophies for both the preliminary and state handicap in 1968. She broke 100's in singles and once fired 99 in doubles with a pump! At the Washington's birthday shoot she captured the handicap championship in 1963. A shoulder injury ended her shooting day prematurely.

The Stoners have always been active in the promotion of trapshooting and the protection of gun owner rights. For many years before taking the PITA position they served at the club and state level in a variety of positions. They also conducted shooting clinics several times over the years and Dick was often an eloquent spokesman for gun rights at many meetings and hearings dealing with gun rules and legislation.

Dick and Elyse did not just "fade away" after their retirement from the Secretary position in 1991. They continued to travel, shoot, promote and help the PITA and have helped sponsor events at the Grand Pacific including the Second Amendment Handicap for several years. When the PITA encountered some problems in the mid-90's, Dick served on the Executive Committee for three years as the Central Handicap Committee chairman. They have also made many donations over the years in support of state associations, individual clubs and the various shooting sports. The countless hours of record keeping, meetings, discussions, work running shoots and promotion of the PITA were a labor of love for Dick and Elyse. Their time as the PITA Secretary was one stop in a lifelong journey of supporting and promoting things they loved and believed in. Our sport and our association are greatly improved because of their efforts over the years.

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