

A TYPICAL SQUARE DANCE MINI MOVIE

**Vernon and Lois Schimmels
Hall of Fame nomination 2023**

Now settle back in your easy chair while the lights dim low and the movie starts. Since we don't have a movie screen just close your eyes and imagine as...

The camera focuses in on a young girl in the '50's as part of a Great Bend, Kansas 4-H group, showing cattle and then it refocuses on a barn dance where kids are square dancing and having a grand time. You can hear the caller belting out calls with the fiddle and the banjo playing in the background. As the country music fades...

The wedding march is heard and now we see this young girl grown up and getting married and starting a family. They have two children, Betsy and Terry. As time moves on too quickly, she moves to Oklahoma City and does sewing and teaches sewing. She furthers her education going back to school learning business and drafting. While here she remembers the good times at the barn dances and starts a square dance club "Spirit of 76" and served as the singles club President. And then ...

The camera focuses on a young boy in overalls living in the country near Arapaho, Oklahoma learning farming and.. Square dancing! What a life attending many of the old barn dances where his dad and granddad served as callers within their squares. Now we see this boy growing up and going to Business school and then joined the army serving in Korea from 1952 to 1954. He later married and had two children, Tony and Lori. He farmed the family farms around Clinton and Putnam. Still involved and enjoying square dancing and serving in a local club and then served as the Southwest District President in 1968. And then...

We hear square dance music again and in May of 1977, Vernon attended a Central District Jamboree in Oklahoma City where he met Lois. Even though they lived 85 miles apart, they continued to date and attend square dances together.

Now the country music fades to Christmas carols and Vernon is asking Lois to marry him. And low and behold she overlooks that western Oklahoma drawl and says YES! On November 25, 1978 we hear wedding bells mixed with square dance music and we see a wedding taking place at the Midwest City Community Center. Square dance callers Bill Brewer and Toots Richardson are calling the dance. Robert Wise is the minister and the children, Betsy is her Maid of Honor and Tony and Terry are the best men. Vernon and Lois step back into a square as husband and wife where her brother and his wife, Dale and Karen Otto, are her corner and Vernon's sister and her husband, Sandy and Ron Johnson are his corner and the other couple are Cliff and Sally Teston. What a wild square dance party it is!

Now the camera follows them through life as they square dance around her work as an LPN at Clinton Regional Hospital and he as he works at the Clinton Public Schools Washington elementary. As the Acme Park train blows its whistle we see Vernon volunteering as the train's engineer. He was also responsible for getting the grade school to include square dancing as part of the curriculum. They both volunteer at the free clinic and Lois cooks on Wednesday night at the First Baptist church. Still keeping square dancing active in their lives, they served as Federation president in 1986, Southwest District president in 1991 and again in 2007, 2013 and in 2019 while serving as State Federation Secretary and district president, that Vernon left this life. He loved and had fun with his children, grand children and great grandchildren who Lois enjoys and still shares square dancing with them. Lois still serves as the State Secretary AND the Southwest District President since 2022.

As the movie fades to the end, the square dance music continues, we know that square dancing was in their lives from the beginning, throughout those wonderful years together and remains to continue.