

Hall of Fame Biography

Dale Friesz – Class of 2002



Dale E. Friesz was born on July 30th, 1940 in St. Louis, Missouri. As the son of a career Army Colonel he traveled a lot as a youth. His family spent two tours in Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington D.C.. Dale did his undergraduate and graduate work at George Washington University in Washington D.C.. He spent 11 years as Director of Human Resources for Fairfax County before taking over the family owned shooting sports business. He ran it for 21 years until his retirement.

Dale was married to Penny for over 40 years. They have three beautiful children – Pamela, Mark and Karen. They also have a great son-in-law Mark, one lovely daughter-in-law Christine, and two beautiful grand children Ansley and Cody. Dale believes his family is his greatest treasure.

Dale learned about Olympic lifting from his older brother Leonard. Dale taught himself to be an Olympic lifter. It was at the 1960 National Collegiate Weightlifting Championships at the University of Maryland that he first met fellow USAWA Hall of Famer, John Vernacchio. In 1963, at the Junior Nationals in Columbia, Missouri he was introduced by his older brother to Bill Clark. In preparation for entering Bill Clark's Masters Olympic Weightlifting at age 39, he again started Olympic lifting. Dale stayed with that style of competition until back and shoulder problems put him on the shelf at age 45.



Dale was inspired by Bill Clark's writings to join the USAWA and is a charter member. The bug to lift again took hold and against medical advice (birth defect in back and a bad shoulder) he entered his first all-round meet in 1989. He has won 18 Masters National Championships, and has placed in several open all-round competitions – which includes the Zercher Meet, the Heavy Lift Championships, and the Deadlift Dozen. Dale has created more than 150 USAWA records.

Dale is most proud of his Right Hand Deadlift of 353.6 pounds at age 52 in the 85 kilogram class and his Neck Lift of 605 pounds at age 55 in the 85 kilogram class. When these lifts were made they were not only masters records but also open records. Dale also like all the Finger Deadlifts and holds a wide range of records in each weight class from 75 kg to 90 kg. He received the Francis D. Ciavattone Sr. AWARD FOR COURAGE in 2003. Dale was awarded the USAWA Courage Award in 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012, the only USAWA member to ever win it four times.



Dale spent much time in the hospital with a variety of life threatening issues during his later years, yet he continued to train and compete in the USAWA. In May 2009 he did a 405 pound Neck Lift record at age 68 in the 85 kilogram class at the Heavy Lift National Championships.

Dale once said, “weightlifting is responsible for him being alive.” Dale passed away on March 18th, 2013. Dale, before his death, thanked Bill Clark for having the sagacity to create masters weightlifting competition!!!