

## **John August Hilske, 2008 US Youth Soccer Hall of Fame Inductee**

John August Hilske was a visionary in the early years of soccer for US Youth Soccer. He labored tirelessly to develop youth soccer and helped soccer to its current level of popularity.

Hilske immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1950. He was an active youth player and continued to play in an indoor league until he was nearly 80 years old.

In 1969, Hilske became one of the founding fathers of the Nebraska State Soccer Association.

Within Nebraska, he co-founded the West Omaha Soccer Club in 1970 and founded the Elkhorn Soccer Club in 1972.

In 1971, Hilske became the first state youth commissioner. Five years later, he was elected as US Youth Soccer Region II Director on the US Youth Soccer board of directors. He served on the board until 1984.

During his tenure as regional commissioner, the membership in Region II grew from 20,000 players to over 165,000 participants. His positive attitude and innovation led the grassroots soccer movement. Today, Region II has over 660,000 registered members.

Hilske was responsible for the James P. McGuire Cup being held in Omaha, Neb., from 1979 to 1984. The McGuire Cup is the oldest youth sports trophy in the country and is the foundation of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series competition. This competition is the most prestigious youth soccer competition in the United States.

Also, Hilske was instrumental in setting up the first youth annual general meeting in Omaha, Neb.

He continued to serve on the board of directors of US Youth Soccer as well as numerous other committees including the Hall of Fame, Rules and Sub-Olympic Committees.

He served Region II tirelessly to make soccer successful in the Midwest.

