

# JERRY HITZHUSEN

Jerry Hitzhusen has dedicated his career in parks and recreation to assuring the highest quality of life for all people, regardless of their physical challenges, age, or ethnicity.

From his start at the Mid-Missouri Mental Health Center in the early 1970s to his international advocacy for disabled athletes, commitment for recreation therapy of our veterans, and advocacy for minority aging populations, Jerry has maintained a focus on individual and team accomplishments as well as individual satisfaction, regardless of personal limitations.

Jerry's passion is evident at the local, state, national, and international levels. Locally, he was a charter member of the Paula J Carter Center for Minority Aging Advisory Board, where he still participates after 19 years. This group works to improve the quality of life for Missouri's aging minority population by promoting health, literacy, and positive health behaviors to reduce disparities and inequities in access to health-related care.

As an advocate for the rehabilitation of the body and spirit of veterans with disabling injuries, Jerry has been a strong supporter of the Missouri Amputee Golf Association, where he was a member of the Board of Directors for five years, and Boots on the Green, where he sat on the Advisory Board for six years.

In 1985, Jerry received a certificate of appreciation from the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped for outstanding contributions to "Inspire 85," an International Forum and Festival on Recreation, Sports, and Cultural Arts for Disabled Persons, by Presidential First Lady Nancy Reagan and US Senator Robert Dole.

On the international level, Jerry was the keynote speaker at the first International Symposium on Sports and Leisure for Persons with Disabilities in Tokyo, Japan. As an international scientific organization of higher education scholars, practitioners, and students dedicated to APA, their purpose is to encourage and promote international cooperation, research, and knowledge in adapted physical education, disability sports, and therapeutic recreation.

In 2012, Jerry was awarded the prestigious PALESTRA Leadership Award in Therapeutic Recreation, an honor only bestowed every ten years.

Jerry was the first North American honored with the Enrique Romero Brest Award. Considered the father of physical education in Argentina, Brest created the teaching career for this subject and founded the first Higher Institute of Physical Education in his country.

He has been a passionate advocate for assuring that all individuals have the opportunity to live their fullest life possible. His tenacious fundraising efforts are remarkable, as demonstrated by securing more than \$6 million for the University of Missouri and other institutions for which he has advocated.

Jerry has led a dramatic and selfless career in therapeutic recreation, helping provide the highest quality of life for countless individuals. His many accomplishments and recognitions in the recreation world reach well beyond the state of Missouri.