



# NEWSLETTER

Fall 2019

Editor: Jim Bertz  
[www.worldacro.com](http://www.worldacro.com)

## A Word From Our President...

### President's Message from Scott Crouse

Dear World Acrobatics Society members, family and friends,

Please join me in extending a heartfelt thank you to David Jacobs for his leadership and many contributions to the World Acrobatics Society during his past two terms as President. During David's tenure, WAS enjoyed four successful Congress & Awards Banquet events, a cohesive team of Board of Directors and an increase in both visibility and financial stability. In his new role as a member of the WAS Board, we will continue to benefit from his ideas and support.

As your new WAS President, I look forward to continuing our organization's forward momentum through an expanded donor base and more opportunities for our members to participate on committees and future projects. I thank each of you for your past support and encourage you to continue your membership and participation in WAS events and activities.

Respectfully,  
Scott Crouse, WAS President

### Congratulations & Thank you from David Jacobs

Dear World Acrobatics Society members, family and friends,  
This year's WAS 2019 Congress may be over, but my memories of that amazing weekend will remain with me forever. First, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge those who contributed to our event's success. Please join me in thanking this year's talented WAS 2019 Congress planning team; whose creative ideas, organization and follow-through brought our exciting weekend into reality.

The recent Congress also marked the end of my four years as President of the World Acrobatics Society. During those four years, I've had the pleasure of meeting and working with our many talented members. I appreciate the leadership and experience of my WAS Board of Directors, who helped strengthen our organization, increase memberships as well as enhancing our worldwide recognition and visibility.

Finally, I congratulate Scott Crouse, as he begins his WAS Presidency. I know you will support him, his Board of Directors and our fine organization, as together, we strive to further the mission of the World Acrobatics Society.

Respectfully,  
David Jacobs, WAS President Emeritus



## World Acrobatics Society 2019 Congress a Success!

On the weekend of September 6-8, 2019, World Acrobatics Society (WAS) members, family and friends gathered at the Tuscan Casino & Suites in Las Vegas for the annual WAS Congress & Gallery of Legends – Hall of Fame (GOLHOF) banquet.

Thanks to the year-long efforts of the WAS 2019 Congress planning committee members, the Congress weekend offered fun, camaraderie and the opportunity to honor this year's nine inductees (not to mention many photo opportunities) for the 125 Congress attendees.

### WAS Welcome Reception

A new addition to the Congress this year, was the Friday night WAS Welcome Reception. As each guest arrived, they received a gift of a cell phone pocket imprinted with the WAS logo. Tucked inside the pocket was a free drink ticket, their banquet meal ticket plus a ticket for that night's special drawing. Live background music throughout the evening was provided by acoustic guitarist Marie Caron. Even the walls of the room were decorated; with a variety of banners from past year's GOLHOF, along with individual posters of this year's inductees. Rome Milan's collection of Olympic torches and memorabilia were enjoyed by all. While off to one side of the room, over 50 WAS Legend videos were continuously streamed on a large TV.





Four drawings were held to win one of four special WAS logo duffle bags. The winners were: Lieve J. Olivera, Suzanne Loweree, Debbie Gaynes and Jeanne deKeyserling. Following each drawing, were several popular photo gatherings. The first group called up was to recognize the Nissen-Emery Award nominees (Mike Jacki, David Jacobs and Bobby Dickson) and award recipients (Steve Hug, Jay Whelan and Dave Thor). Then group photos were taken of attendees who had competed either nationally or internationally in one of the WAS acrobatic disciplines during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

The over 75 attendees enjoyed this unique WAS event and appreciated the opportunity to reminisce with friends as well as meet the 2019 GOLHOF inductees and their guests.

### **Meet the Legends Q & A**

Over 45 attendees filled the meeting room for Saturday afternoon's traditional Meet the Legends Q&A, which featured the WAS Class of 2019 honorees. The hour-long program gave each honoree the opportunity to share a little more about themselves and what contributed to their great accomplishments. From their memories of overcoming childhood challenges to recounting humorous stories as well as acknowledging key persons who provided their strength and inspiration; the honorees all agreed that hard work and dedication was the core to their life-long success.

At the conclusion of the program, each honoree received a WAS logo duffle bag plus a WAS logo polo shirt. These were presented to the honorees by WAS 2009 Legend, David Jacobs and WAS 2000 Legend, Judy Wills Cline.

### **Special Presentation**

Following the Meet the Legends Q&A program, Louanne Madorma Williams, Director of Casting/Artistic Implementation for the Wynn Hotels, spoke on Mentoring Athletes from Competitive Sport to Performance. Louanne captured the audience's attention and imagination as she revealed the dynamics in play when auditioning athletes and training them to become acrobatic performers. She shared her pride that she not only followed necessary protocols, but also made sure she used her heart and went the extra mile when determining whether or not someone was a good fit for their organization. As a result of her careful mentoring, young athletes in the Wynn Hotels shows, have been successful making the transition from a sport mindset to that of a dedicated performer.

### **Gallery of Legends-Hall of Fame Awards Banquet**

Saturday evening marked the highlight of the WAS 2019 Congress weekend with the 19th annual Gallery of Legends – Hall of Fame Awards Banquet. An audience of approximately 125 people honored the nine Class of 2019 inductees, who had been selected for their high level of accomplishment and contributions to the acrobatic community.

The pre-banquet reception hour featured live background music once again provided by the talented acoustic guitarist, Marie Caron. Everyone enjoyed the display on one wall of WAS banners and Class of 2019 individual posters; which made for an excellent backdrop for group and selfie photos. The banquet tables which filled the room, were festively decorated with a variety of small international flags.



*World Acrobatics Society 2019 Congress, continued*



David Jacobs, outgoing WAS President, signaled for all to take their seats and soon after he presented the first award of the evening; the Charlie Pond Service Award to Dagmar Nissen Munn.

He then graciously acknowledged and thanked the event sponsors, which included: the Raymond C. Rude Foundation; Bruno Klaus, International Gymnastics Camps; Nel Filliger, Fantasy RV Tours; and John Deary, DGS 9.9. Individual donors were Darlene Ziemba Hicks, Larry Snyder and Stacie Hansen.

Following the excellent banquet dinner, Scott Crouse, incoming WAS President and Lieve Olivera, WAS Board Member, stepped onto the podium and began the evening's exciting induction ceremony.

One by one, each new Legend was introduced, along with a tribute video displaying their contributions to their sport and the history of their accomplishments.

**The 2019 WAS Legends honored were:**

- Acrobatic Gymnastics** - Dr. John D. Sweetland and Bob Monahan
- Artistic Gymnastics** - Svetlana Boguinskaia
- Diving** - Hongping Li
- Extreme Sports** - Jeff Chumas
- Professional Acrobatics** - Daniel COLA
- Trampoline and Tumbling** - Roger H. Walker
- Lifetime Achievement Award** - Dave Thor
- Golden Achievement Award** - Dr. Jay Whelan

The honoree's acceptance speeches were heartwarming, well received by all and even prompted several standing ovations. The evening closed with outgoing WAS President, David Jacobs receiving a thank you gift from WAS Board of Directors along with a heartfelt standing ovation from all in attendance.

Including these eight honorees, the WAS Gallery of Legends - Hall of Fame has inducted 297 individuals from around the world over the past 19 years. Next year's event is scheduled for September 11-13, 2020 and will be held at the Tuscany Suites & Casino in Las Vegas.

*The World Acrobatics Society thanks Daniel Gove, who took on the role of WAS photographer for the entire weekend and supplied the Congress photos featured in this newsletter, on our website and Facebook group page.*

**World Acrobatics Society 2019 Gallery of Legends - Hall of Fame**



Front L-R: Dr John D. Sweetland (Acrobatic Gymnastics), Dagmar Nissen Munn (Charlie Pond Award)  
 Back L-R: WAS President Emeritus David Jacobs, Roger H. Walker (Tumbling), Svetlana Boguinskaia (Artistic Gymnastics), Hongping Li (Diving), Dr Jay Whelan (Golden Achievement Award), Daniel COLA (Professional Acrobatics), Dave Thor (Lifetime Achievement Award), Jeff Chumas (Extreme Sports).



## An Interview with Lieve J. Olivera



Lieve Olivera is a current WAS Board Member and most recently was co-Master of Ceremonies at the WAS 2019 Gallery of Legends – Hall of Fame Banquet.

### How did you first become involved in the sport of artistic gymnastics?

I come from a very musical family, and when I was 6 years old, my mother gave me 50 Belgian Francs and sent me to 'lunchtime' piano lessons at my school. However, very quickly I discovered that I could not sit still on a piano bench for a long time, and on my way

home I discovered a gymnastics class. I remember looking through the window and loving what I saw. I, too, wanted to do handstands and cartwheels... So, instead of giving the 50 Francs to the Piano Teacher, I gave it to the Gym Teacher, week after week, without telling my mother. Until, during a family Easter gathering I was asked to play a piece on our Bosendorfer piano in front of the entire family. My mother was disappointed in my 'lack of' progress and decided to go and talk to the Piano Teacher, who responded with: "Lieve who?"...My mother grounded me from gymnastics for a short time, however, since I resumed the childhood classes, I haven't stopped for one moment expressing this beautiful sport, and have been blessed to be able to do so in many different capacities.

Incidentally, I am now married to a world-renowned musician, Hector Olivera - - to the delight of my mother!

### What was your most positive experience you had while participating?

I have had so many wonderful experiences, however, one very positive one was coaching children who were physically or intellectually challenged. For example, there was a girl named Jocelyn who had Down Syndrome. It took 8 months for Jocelyn to learn a very simple cartwheel, however, I will never forget the smile on her face showing me the end result. That image of joy still puts a smile on my face!

And there was Jasmine who had trouble balancing due to a 'Lazy Eye' medical condition. Jasmine's steadfastness however, even when falling off the beam time after time, catapulted her to determination and success in life.

And there is the memory of Anthony Ikin, one of the few boys in my school. As a direct consequence of gymnastics, Anthony excelled as one of Australia's foremost dancers and choreographers, and opened 'Ikin Dance Academy' with phenomenal success.

There were so many instances witnessing the sport of gymnastics go beyond the actual learning of skills.

It always warms my heart when I still hear, to this day, from former gymnasts telling me how the sport has influenced the person they have become. In my opinion, that's the definition of success.

### What motivated you to become a judge of artistic gymnastics?

By invitation, I started judging when I was 15, and loved it ever since. It was always my dream to travel and judge at major international competitions, which I have had the opportunity to do so. I represented Australia as a FIG judge for many years, and have fond memories judging worldwide and maintaining friendships to this present day. I must add that one of my most cherished moments was giving my first 'Perfect 10' as a judge to Svetlana Boguinskaia on Floor Exercise.

### Was there a most memorable trip that you took during your early gymnastics or judging career?

There are so many trips I enjoyed. One of my memorable ones was traveling with the Australian National Team to Cottbus, East Germany, as politically known in the late eighties. I saw so much oppression in the eyes of the citizens, yet, there was a kindness at the same time that was endearing when they opened their doors and hearts to us, welcoming us in their small homes.

During one of the trips I had the opportunity to visit East Berlin, as the wall had just come down, yet the oppression still existed, and life remained difficult. When visiting with the Aussie team, we literally brought home pieces from the Berlin Wall, which was still standing in various places.

I also have fond memories of being part of the Australian Pre-Olympic Team tour in Romania, and France in 1996. I witnessed the limited circumstances in which the Romanian gymnasts trained, yet they were producing Olympians like clockwork. Although Romania's Gold Olympic Medalist Nadia Comaneci trained during the 70's in Romania, it gave me a glimpse of Nadia's pure passion and discipline for the sport, and how she had applied herself while training under this regime, unwittingly. I have the utmost admiration and respect for former Olympic gymnasts like Nadia Comaneci and Svetlana Boguinskaia who continue to selflessly give back to the sport through being undeniable outstanding role models. They are not resting on their laurels. It's those qualities of sportsmanship in its truest sense that we need to continuously uphold, and carve as models for our young athletes.

### What was it that drew you to the World Acrobatics Society and join its Board of Directors?

I met former WAS president, Mr. David Jacobs, -gentleman extraordinaire- during the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame induction event, and we started a long conversation about sport, its goals for excellence and recognition of achievement, long after the 'shine' of the medal has faded.

As a present member of the Board of Directors of the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame, I know how important it is to keep standards of excellence very high, yet not only skill, event or result related, but also in the realm of integrity, dedication, support and giving back to the sport,

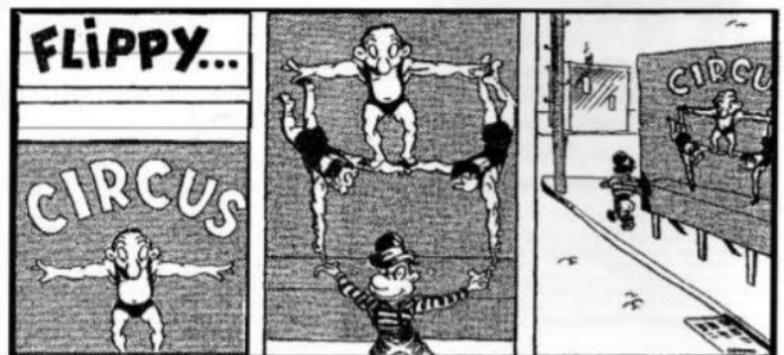
As the World Acrobatic Society represents many sports, including gymnastics, I knew that I could contribute due to my past experience in many aspects of the sport, from former coach to FIG judge, lecturer, gymnastics school owner, and current IGHO board member.

### What did you enjoy most about the recent WAS 2019 Congress weekend in Las Vegas?

Everything! It's a wonderful organization whose board members work very hard to recognize and reward excellence in various sports, with international representation.

I am honored and grateful to be part of this fine group of people. Thank you, World Acrobatic Society!

WAS



## In Memory of Karl Schier (Legend 2011/2016)



Sad news to share - - Karl Schier, a decorated combat veteran, NCAA champion gymnast, and former Penn State men's gymnastics coach who received the WAS 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award and the 2016 Charlie Pond Service Award, as well as served on the WAS Board of Directors as 1st Vice-President in 2012 - - passed away on

September 15, 2019, at the age of 85.

He is survived by his son Kurt Karl Schier and his grandson, Alik Altyn Schier who live in Washington DC. Karl's remains will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery later this year at a date to be announced. A public ceremony will be held at that time with the family providing details when available. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Rosemount Center in Washington DC. <https://www.rosemountcenter.com/donate>

Karl's contributions to the ongoing development of the World Acrobatics Society are deeply appreciated. He will be remembered and missed by all. Our thoughts and sincere condolences are with Kurt's family during this difficult time.

This excellent tribute by Penn State University embraces Karl's well-lived life: <https://gopsusports.com/news/2019/9/21/former-penn-state-mens-gymnastics-head-coach-karl-schier-passes-away/>

Karl's WAS Legend video can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwcOulbjW2A&feature=youtu.be>



*...and now, the 'real' ending to Dave's speech...  
(without the music!)*

*I take honor in sharing with you the conclusion of Dave Thor's acceptance speech, which references three individuals who were instrumental in his life's success story.*

*David Jacobs*

“Several of my gymnastics friends introduced me to another of my lifelong flying dreams. Rich Grigsby and Stu Smith, both national gymnastics champions, were also national & international hang glider pilots, and, though I got into the competition to a lesser degree than each of them, I owe them for the gift of letting me be able to make hundred miles flights & fly with the hawks & eagles for a couple of decades.

Finally: I'm not sure what it is that makes us want to fly, but I saw it in the soul of Aaron "WHEELS" Fotheringham last year, when I saw him fly off the podium in last year's WAS inductions with the same determination & grace that he demonstrated at the Nitro Games on the giant ramp. ”

*Dave Thor, WAS 2019 Legend: Lifetime Achievement*

## Bobby Dickson's Comedy Corner



# How To: *Keep Receiving the WAS Newsletter All Year*

## **Are you a current WAS member?**

You can renew your membership for 2020 now!

[Just click here to renew](#)

All memberships in the World Acrobatics Society run on a yearly calendar basis (January 1st - December 31st). Since your 2019 membership will expire at the end of this year, you can save time plus, not miss important event announcements and all the news about your World Acrobatics Society friends — by simply renewing your membership today!

Renewing your membership couldn't be easier. Just go to [worldacro.com](http://worldacro.com) and follow the instructions on our [Join/Donate](#) page.

Here's what being a member of WAS gives you:

- A full-year subscription to the WAS quarterly newsletter.
- Enables you to submit nominations to the Gallery of Legends - Hall of Fame/Awards.
- Gives you voting rights at the annual Membership Meeting.
- Puts you among an exciting, growing world-wide organization whose members share a love of acrobatics.
- Satisfaction of knowing that your payment is helping support WAS events that honor the Legends in our acrobatic community.

We hope that you will renew your membership today and remain part of our community!

[Just click here to renew](#)

**Thank you!**

## **Not yet a member of WAS?**

We invite you join the World Acrobatics Society!

[Joining is easy - - just click here](#)

We have two levels of membership to choose from: *1-Year Annual* or *Lifetime*.

Both memberships:

- Include a full-year subscription to the WAS quarterly newsletter.
- Enable you to submit nominations to the Gallery of Legends - Hall of Fame/Awards.
- Give you voting rights at the annual Membership Meeting.
- Put you among an exciting, growing world-wide organization whose members share a love of acrobatics.
- Give you the satisfaction of knowing that your payment is helping support WAS events that honor the Legends in our acrobatic community

Why not join us?

By joining WAS today, you'll never miss important event announcements or news about your World Acrobatics Society friends. Plus, your membership starts now and is good through the end of 2020.

We look forward to welcoming you into our world-wide acrobatic community!

Just go to [worldacro.com](http://worldacro.com) and follow the instructions on our [Join/Donate](#) page.

**Thank you!**

## 2019 WAS

### New Board of Directors

#### Exec. committee:

Scott Crouse - President  
John Deary - 1st VP  
Larry Lindauer - 2nd VP  
Stacie Hansen - Secretary  
Jay Geist – Treasurer

#### Board members:

Whitey Anson  
Scott Barclay  
Judy Wills Cline  
Jon Culbertson  
John Deininger  
Nellie Filliger  
Jerry George  
Abie Grossfeld  
Nancy Thurston Huggins  
Mike Jacki  
David Jacobs  
Rich Kenney  
Bruno Klaus  
Wayne Miller  
Lieve J. Ollvera  
Dian Nissen Ramirez  
Jake Ramirez

#### International:

Bobby Dickson  
Hardy Fink  
Pedro Reis  
Greg Roe

## Announcements

Newly elected slate of officers to the WAS Board:

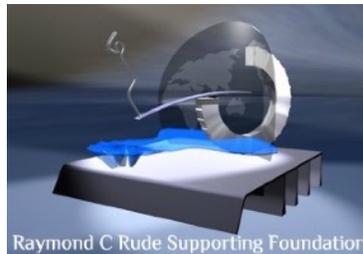
Scott Crouse, WAS President  
John Deary, 1st Vice-President  
Larry Lindauer, 2nd Vice-President  
Jay Geist, Treasurer  
Stacie Hansen, Secretary

We extend a welcome to our new WAS Board members: Hardy Fink and Jerry George.

### Save the date!

The WAS 2020 Congress & GOLHOF Awards Banquet will be held September 11-13, 2020 at the Tuscany Suites & Casino in Las Vegas.

## World Acrobatics Society Sponsors



## WAS Mission

The mission of the World Acrobatics Society is to advance the education, communication and cooperation among all individuals and organizations interested in fostering the growth, development and safety of the various acrobatic disciplines along with preserving their histories.

The World Acrobatics Society is a not for profit foundation. corporate and individual contributions to WAS are 501(c)3 deductible.