



NEWSLETTER

Fall 2021

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~ A Word from your WAS Executive Board of Directors ~



Stacie Hanson
Secretary



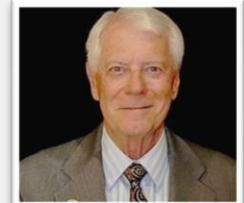
John Deary
1st Vice President



Scott Crouse
President



Rich Kenney
2nd Vice President



Jay Geist
Treasurer

Dear Members and Friends of the World Acrobatics Society,

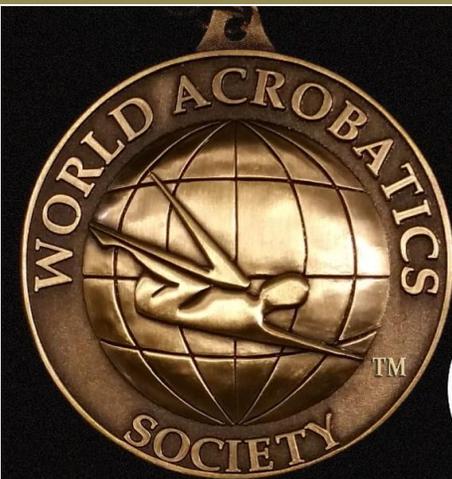
We were excited to see so many from our worldwide acrobatic community join us this past September at the WAS 2021 Congress & Awards Banquet in Las Vegas. At the start of this year, holding the Congress was still a question mark in everyone's mind. But as the world's health crisis began to calm down, our Congress planning committee eagerly dove into making arrangements. I'm sure you'll agree with our assessment - - that the 2021WAS Congress weekend was - - a success!

In this newsletter, we share snapshot views and a synopsis of the entire event, attended by 89 friends and family from the WAS community. Of course, the highlight of the weekend was the induction ceremony at the Gallery of Legends - Hall of Fame Banquet. The honoree's acceptance speeches were heartwarming, well-received, and the tribute videos were spectacular.

In addition, this newsletter includes several articles of interest: Debbi Quaid, WAS 2015 Legend and the newest member of the WAS Board of Directors shares memories of her acrobatic gymnastics competition days. Bobby Dickson's Comedy Corner returns with his usual fun flair for humor and as we wind down the year, be sure to note your WAS membership will need to be renewed for 2022. We have made "Early Bird Memberships" available on our website - - renew or join now before the holiday distractions hit.

We thank you for your continued support of the World Acrobatics Society and look forward to being with each of you again at next year's WAS 2022 Congress. Be sure to save the date: September 9-11, 2022, in Las Vegas.

Wishing you happy holidays!



Gallery of Legends - Hall of Fame 2021 Inductees



World Acrobatics Society 2021 Congress & Hall of Fame Banquet - -A Success!

The World Acrobatics Society celebrated its 25th anniversary (1996-2021) at its annual "Gallery of Legends – Hall of Fame" banquet on September 11, 2021, at the Tuscany Casino & Suites in Las Vegas.

Thanks to the year-long efforts of the WAS 2021 Congress planning committee, the WAS Congress weekend offered the 89 attendees much camaraderie, fun, and the opportunity to honor this year's inductees to the WAS Hall of Fame.

WAS Welcome Reception

Kicking off the WAS Congress weekend, the *Welcome Reception* gave all who attended the opportunity to reminisce with friends as well as meet the 2021 Hall of Fame inductees and their guests. Live background music throughout the evening was provided by acoustic guitarist Marie Caron.

WAS Membership Annual Meeting

Scott Crouse, WAS President, opened Saturday morning's annual meeting of the WAS membership. He, along with members of the WAS Executive committee provided updates on the organization's goals and activities as well as answered member questions.

Meet the Legends Q & A

Saturday afternoon's traditional *Meet the Legends Q&A*, featured the WAS Class of 2021 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.

In appreciation, each honoree received a WAS logo duffel bag plus a WAS logo polo shirt.

Special Presentation

Following the *Meet the Legends Q&A* program, Retired Captain George Dom (USN), gave a keynote presentation. He captured the audience's attention and imagination with videos of the Blue Angels' show maneuvers and training. He shared with pride the dedicated teamwork required to perform the extraordinary complex aerobatics and the shared culture of excellence and service to country.



2021 Congress continued...

Gallery of Legends-Hall of Fame Awards Banquet

Saturday evening marked the highlight of the weekend with the gala *Gallery of Legends – Hall of Fame Awards Banquet*.

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 Legends banners and Class of 2021 individual posters; which made for an excellent backdrop for group photos and selfies. The banquet tables which filled the room, were festively decorated and each place setting included the evening's program booklet and gift of two WAS logo luggage tags.

Emcee Donny Ray Evins , former gymnast, now Las Vegas entertainer, opened the evening by serenading the audience with a song. Following the excellent banquet dinner, WAS President, Scott Crouse and Donny Ray Evins stepped onto the podium to begin the evening's exciting induction ceremony.



The honoree's acceptance speeches were heartwarming, well received by all and even prompted several standing ovations.

The evening closed with a thank you to Congress and event sponsors, which included: the Raymond C. Rude Supporting Foundation; International Gymnastics Camps; Nel Filliger, Fantasy RV Tours; and John Deary, DGS 9.9. Individual donors were David Jacobs and Darlene Hicks, Ron and Dagmar Nissen Munn, and Nancy Thurston-Hughhins.

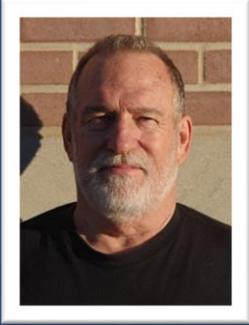
Special thank you to Rocio Hernandez, Emile Griffith, and Shaun Cashin from GKN Aerospace for creating and donating the unique award presented to the Blue Angels.

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

Be sure to check out the "2021 WAS Congress Highlights" on the WAS website: www.worldacro.com



2021 WAS Hall of Fame.



DIVING – Don Dunfield – Trampoline/acrobat/diver who performed internationally and before retiring coached collegiate springboard diving.

TRAMPOLINE/TUMBLING – Karen Cockburn – Canada's most decorated Olympic trampoline athlete who continues on as Canadian National Team Director.



CHARLIE POND SERVICE AWARD – Nel Filliger – As a member of WAS since its inception in 1996, Nel serves the organization in many capacities and is producer of the annual Hall of Fame inductee videos.

PROFESSIONAL ACROBATICS – Cristiani Family
One of the most famous acrobatic equestrians in circus history. Ernesto "Tino" Cristiani accepted on his family's behalf.



ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS – Nellie Kim – Gold medal Olympic gymnast from the Soviet Union who became President of the Women's Gymnastics Technical Committee for the Federation of International Gymnastics.

ACROBATIC GYMNASTICS - Sergii Popov & Mykola Shcherbak – World champion sport acrobatic duo who transitioned to professional acrobatics and performed worldwide. Anna Kachalova accepted on the duo's behalf. *Photo: Mykola and son*



GOLDEN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD – Norbert Dill (1938-2021)
– A champion of wheel gymnastics who founded a top-selling gymnastics supply company while continuing to support the growth of wheel gymnastics worldwide. Loren Dill accepted on his father's behalf.



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD – Wendy Hilliard – The first Black rhythmic gymnast to represent the US in international competition who founded the Wendy Hilliard Gymnastics Foundation serving urban youth in New York City and Detroit.

ACROBATIC EXCELLENCE AWARD – Blue Angels - Celebrating 75 years of thrilling aerial acrobatic team performances with extraordinary execution of complex aerobatics, the Blue Angels continue to inspire and foster a culture of excellence and service to country

Including these ten honorees, the WAS Gallery of Legends - Hall of Fame has inducted 307 individuals from around the world over the past 21 years.



An Interview with Debbi Quaid



Debbi Quaid is a WAS 2015 Legend in Acrobatic Gymnastics competing for the USA as a member of a trio. Since she is also the newest member of the WAS Board of Directors, we asked her to tell us a little about herself.

☞ How did you get your start in acrobatic sports?

“I got my start in gymnastics at about seven when all of the middle and high school girls in the neighborhood were practicing in the front yard. I discovered that I could do every skill they were learning, so my mom decided to enroll in a class at the local YMCA. At the end of class on my very first day I asked the coach to spot me on a flip flop because I thought I could do it but didn't trust my neighbors to spot me. I was asked to join their team not long after that. When I was about to turn 11, we heard about a Russian coach teaching a different kind of gymnastics in the area and decided to go see a class. That very night he had me work with Cricket and Gina. I fell head over heels in love with the sport of Acrobatic Gymnastics, and that is saying something because I thought I was in love with artistic gymnastics. I was partnered with them for six years; the rest is history.”



USA Trio at 1978 Volkov Cup
Top: Cricket Borgman Lapeyre, Middle: Gina Groves
VanAmburgh, Bottom: Debbi Dodd Quaid

☞ What was the most positive experience you had while participating in your sport?

“For me the most positive experience was the opportunity to represent my country in International competitions. Also, to be able to share my love of the sport with others.”

☞ In what ways have your experiences in your sport helped you in your life today?

“My experience in Acrobatics made me an exceptional team player as well as teaching me courage, confidence, perseverance, determination and that anything I want to do I can do. It has made me a better parent, a better person and a better partner and friend.”

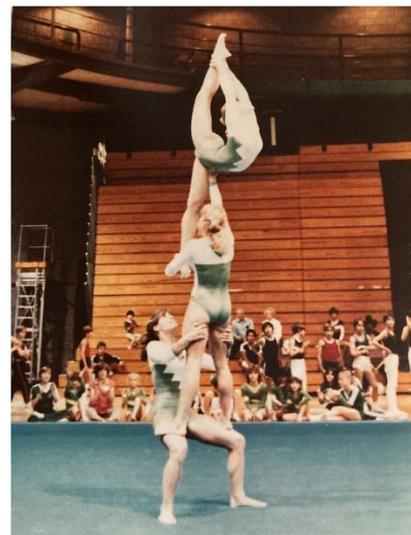
☞ Was there any person you looked up to when you were involved in your sport?

“As a trio and competitor, I looked up to both our coaches Igor Ashkinazi, Jurek Pol, and most especially, Morgan Smith, as well as the Russian and Bulgarian trios. To this day I still have a friendship with one of the members of the Bulgarian trio we met in Russia in 1978.”

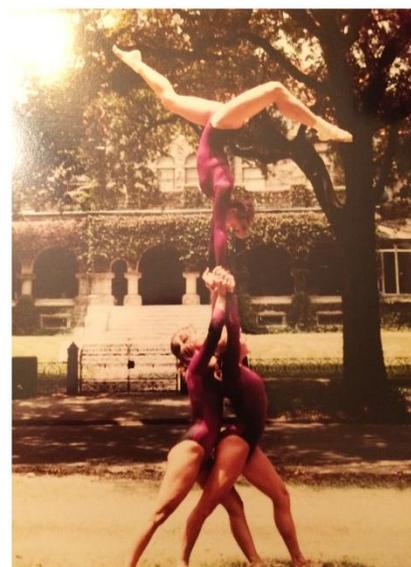
☞ As a member of the WAS Board of Directors, what do you hope to bring to the Board and organization?

“As a Board Member I hope to bring a knowledge of the past, that helps us to preserve the history of our sports, as well as an increasingly larger audience through sharing with a new generation of athletes as a coach of young people.”

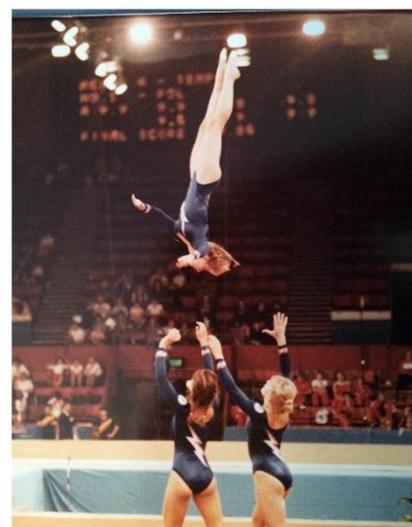
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US Nationals (circa 1982/1983)



Publicity photo in New Orleans prior to 1982 World Championships, London



1982 World Championships, London
Athlete in the air: Debbi Dodd Quaid



Bobby Dickson's Comedy Corner

“All Part of the Glamour of Showbiz”

After 47 wonderful years in showbiz, I am thoroughly enjoying my retirement from same. One of the main reasons that I am so content is the fact that I do not ever have to deal with agents and directors again.

Now don't get me wrong. Not ALL the agents and directors that I dealt with were (*insert your choice of explicative here*), but all the jokes and stories about these two categories of people do have their basis in truth. Here are a couple of prime examples.

In the early 1980's I was performing in the traveling edition of the Hungarian State Circus. On circus grounds, you have a central water connection with several faucets where everyone can hook up water for their travel trailers, animals, and other purposes. I had very good water connections and even wrote my name on them so that there could be no mistake about whose they were. But every time we traveled, my connection on the faucet went missing. They were fairly expensive and you could not get them in Hungary.

So, after a while, Bobby decided to play detective. At about 4:00 AM on a travel day, I took a thermos of coffee and planted myself under one of the circus wagons. Sure enough, just before dawn I saw a shadowy figure disconnecting my water hose from the faucet. I moved out of my hiding spot and silently crept up on the thieving perpetrator. Suddenly, I stopped. And then I said...in a very authoritative and somewhat menacing German voice: “Good morning, Herr Director.”

Yup, it was the director of the State Circus who had been stealing my water connections. We then went to his travel trailer to retrieve a box full of my stolen connections. He was not a bit ashamed and didn't even apologize.

And now for the agents...

Several years ago, a Belgian agent called me with an 'offer.' I said that I would have to call my bank, (*that was **B.T.I.** - - “before the internet”*), before I could give him an answer. He asked why, and I replied: “I have to ask them how much I have in my account to see if I have enough money to make it through the season...because I can't live on what you are offering.”

He was furious, called me a couple of not-too-complementary names, and said that he could get somebody else for half that money...which he did. I kept track and that person only lasted a few weeks before he had to leave and go home...broke, I would imagine. I guess he didn't have enough money in his account to make it through the whole season. Funny how that works.

Strangely enough, I never got another 'offer' from that agent. I wonder why.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Early Bird WAS Memberships

Renew (or join) today! - and your next renewal payment won't be due until January, 2023

[Just click here to join or renew](#)

All memberships in the World Acrobatics Society run on a yearly calendar basis (January 1st - December 31st). Since your 2021 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 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.
- Qualifies 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!

Thank you!

Nominations for 2022 Gallery of Legends – Hall of Fame

Will be accepted
December 1, 2021 thru February 28, 2022.

Important dates to keep in mind: • The WAS 2022 Congress & Induction Banquet will be held: September 9-11, 2022. • Nominations will be accepted December 1, 2021 through February 28, 2022. • The final selection of inductees will be announced in April 2022.

Who can nominate and do we both have to attend the event? • Only current members of the World Acrobatics Society can submit a nomination, so make sure you are a paid-up member. To verify your membership status, email us at: worldacro@gmail.com and we will check for you. • The person you are nominating, does not need to be a current WAS member. If they are selected and inducted, they will receive a one-year complimentary membership in WAS. • We would *prefer* the nominator attend the event. However, the inductee is **expected** to attend, so make sure you're both available and have the dates saved.

Where are the nomination forms? • The only method of making a nomination is **online** via the WAS website. • The official nomination forms will be available on the WAS website by December 1, 2021.

How do I know which category fits my nominee? • There are **specific criteria** for each award category that will serve as a guideline letting you know what a Legend or Award recipient would ideally fulfill.

All information will be available on the WAS website by December 1, 2021. **Questions?** If you have any questions or need additional information either now or during the nomination process, contact the WAS Gallery of Legends - Hall of Fame (GOLHOF) Administrator/Chair at: staciedgs@gmail.com

Thank you!



Celebrating 25 Years of World Acrobatics Society!



Nel Filliger received the WAS 2021 Charlie Pond Service Award and has been a member of the World Acrobatics Society since its early formative years.

☞ We asked Nel to share with us a few of her memories of that exciting time.

"In 1996, when we gathered in Las Vegas to form this organization, it was exciting to be in with many literal legends from seven disciplines that "flip," and to hear their stories which spanned decades. The sports represented were Artistic Gymnastics, Diving, Sports Acrobatics, Trampoline, Tumbling, Freestyle Skiing, and Professional Acrobatics. We knocked out an organizational plan and our mission statement of:

A worldwide forum to enhance communication, cooperation, education and friendship among all individuals who are interested in the preservation of Acrobatic history plus the growth and development of various acrobatic disciplines."

☞ How did you become involved with producing the WAS Legend tribute videos that are shown at each annual WAS Congress & Banquet and, what do you enjoy about creating each video?

"In 2016, I was serving as a WAS board member as well as on the Gallery of Legends nominating committee. While at the 2016 awards banquet, as I was watching the video presentations it hit me how I could contribute to WAS and perhaps make a significant difference; improving the quality of our GOL Hall of Fame presentations. The awards banquet and video presentations are THE most important function of the organization. Since I have an extensive marketing background and my company has production capability, I volunteered to create the videos moving forward.

Creating the videos is very time-consuming but I truly enjoy learning all about each inductee. I seem to go down "rabbit holes" doing research above and beyond the bios submitted to WAS. Kurt Rasche who works for my company in the IT department puts together the videos and is an expert at video production. We spend endless research hours in the rabbit hole creating chronological stories enhanced by our music selection which tells each inductee's story and hopefully entertains the audience."



BOARD PRESIDENT HOBIE BILLINGSLEY, SOCIAL CHAIRPERSON, NELLE FILLIGER AND "GO FOR IT CLASSIC" DIRECTOR DON SPENCER STAND OUTSIDE THE LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER WHERE THE FIRST W.A.S. CONGRESS WILL BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 7-8-9-10, 1997



Original 1996 WAS logo

Editor: Dagmar Nissen Munn