



# NEWSLETTER

July 2023

## *Meet the World Acrobatics Society Hall of Fame - - Class of 2023*



### *Acrobatic Gymnastics - Morgan Stanley Smith (1950-2000)*

Morgan was an athlete, coach, and author, and contributed to the growth of acrobatic gymnastics in the early years of its development in England and the USA. He initially competed in artistic gymnastics for 12 years representing the UK, then spent four more years competing in tumbling and acrobatic gymnastics. Moving to the U.S., Morgan became the first Program Director for the United States Sports Acrobatics Federation, developing its national training program. He also published a book on Sports Acrobatics, was a writer/contributor for *Acrosport Magazine*, and established and was coach of the Acro 1 Club in New Orleans, producing many champion athletes.



### *Action Sports – Ryan Dole*

Dole is a freerunner, martial artist, coach, and actor from Liverpool, England, and is a founding athlete of the World Freerunning and Parkour Federation. Combining martial art skills with self-taught gymnastics, he was the National Tricking Champion in 2006, '07, '09, and 2010. Dole was a supporting artist in the British TV soap opera *Hollyoaks* and performed movie stunts playing the evil 'Finch' in *Freerunner* (2011), as well as in the lead role in *Mindgamer's* (2017), and has won several awards for his own action shorts films. Partnering with the Liverpool Parkour community Dole helped open UK's biggest Urban Sports facility, Airborne Academy

*JOIN US in honoring these talented individuals at [the World Acrobatics Society 2023 Congress & Hall of Fame Banquet](#), September 8-10, 2023, at the Tuscany Suites & Casino in Las Vegas.*

## *Hall of Fame - - Class of 2023 (continued)*



### ***Artistic Gymnastics – Daniela Silivas***

While a member of the Romanian women's artistic gymnastic team, Daniela first earned fame at the 1985 World Championships, where she won the gold medal on the balance beam with a perfect 10.00 score. Among her many world titles, she is best known for medaling in every single event at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, winning six medals (three gold, two silver, and one bronze). Silivas closed her international career at the 1989 World Championships in Stuttgart, winning three more gold medals. She retired from competition in 1991, moving to the U.S. where she now coaches young gymnasts.



### ***Diving – David Boudia***

Boudia began diving at the age of 11 and five years later, in 2006, he became a member of the U.S. National Diving Team. Attending Purdue University, Boudia was a six-time NCAA champion. As a member of the 2008 U.S. Olympic team, he competed in the 10-meter platform and in synchronized 10-meter platform. He and his synchro partner medaled at the 2007 and 2009 World Championships, and at the 2012 London Olympics, where Boudia won gold in 10-meter platform diving. Switching gears, Boudia authored the autobiography, *Greater Than Gold* and was a judge on the TV reality show *Splash*. He currently is the Associate Diving Coach at Purdue University.



### ***Professional Acrobatics - The Flying Españas***

The Españas family has one of the most influential aerial acrobatics and action sports legacies in the circus world. Since their debut in 1973, 14 members of the extended Españas family have performed professionally in myriad circuses, festivals, theme parks, theatre, television and film. Throughout the family's many generations, they have demonstrated a wide range of expertise in performing trampoline, tumbling, hand-balancing, web, and trapeze acrobatics, and received many prestigious circus honors and awards.

## *Hall of Fame - - Class of 2023 (continued)*



### ***Tumbling/Trampoline – Tracy Kontur-Richter***

At the age of 12, Tracy was the youngest person to win the Senior National Tumbling Championships (1980) and the World Tumbling Championships (1980). In addition, she helped lead the Cindy Kwiek Tumbling Team to four straight State and National Tumbling Team titles and was a 4-time Varsity Letterman in artistic gymnastics for the University of Illinois, winning the Big Ten Championship in 1990.



### ***Golden Achievement Award – Rich Kenney***

While a member of the University of Michigan's men's artistic gymnastics team, Kenney served as Team Captain and was a three-year letterman specializing in still rings. Following graduation, he taught studio art, and art history, and coached gymnastics as owner of a gym club. Kenney went on to be the Production Editor and photographer for *Gymnast Magazine* (1973) and *International Gymnast* (1975-1979). Then as Marketing, Communications, and Sponsorship Director for the United States Gymnastics Federation (USGF), Kenney planned and implemented marketing, TV packaging, and corporate sponsorship programs funding the USGF and its teams through three successive Olympics. Co-founding the AeroED Group in San Diego, he received the "Outstanding Contribution to Aerospace Education" award in 2018. Rich resides in San Diego with his wife Michele and has held the position of Vice President for the World Acrobatics Society since 2019.



### ***Lifetime Achievement Award - Masayuki "Mas" Watanabe***

Watanabe began his artistic gymnastics career at the age of 12 in Mihara, Japan, and in high school trained in all six of the Olympic events. He graduated from Nippon Physical Education College and was a member of the Japanese Men's National Team for five years and was the alternate for the 1966 World Championships, where Japan won the gold medal. Arriving in the U.S. in 1969, Watanabe became a guiding force for U.S. men's artistic gymnastics. In 1973 he wrote the compulsories for the United States Gymnastics Federation's (USGF) first Olympic program, then became the USGF's men's Program Director in 1977, and men's National Team coordinator in 1988. Mas spent the last several decades coaching in private clubs and retired from coaching in 2020.





## ***In the Spotlight - - WAS Member Lisa Cawthron***

Lisa Cawthron served as our official event photographer at last year's Congress & Hall of Fame Banquet in Las Vegas, and she will be back snapping photos for us again this year. We certainly appreciate Lisa's photography skills - - as many of her excellent photos have been featured in the last three WAS newsletters as well as can be found on our WAS website. Since she is a new member of the World Acrobatics Society, we asked Lisa to share with us a little more about herself and her connection to the acrobatic community.

### ***How did you get started in acrobatic sports and which WAS discipline did you excel in?***

My start in gymnastics was a bit slow. I had all of this energy as a little girl and my parents wanted to find a program where they offered tumbling. Well, there was no tumbling, ...but juggling! I was terrible! My parents did some further research and found the Fort Worth Sokol with Hank and Jerry Milan. They took me as far as they could and informed my parents that I had something special and to find me a coach. My father found a coach, and my training began in artistic gymnastics.



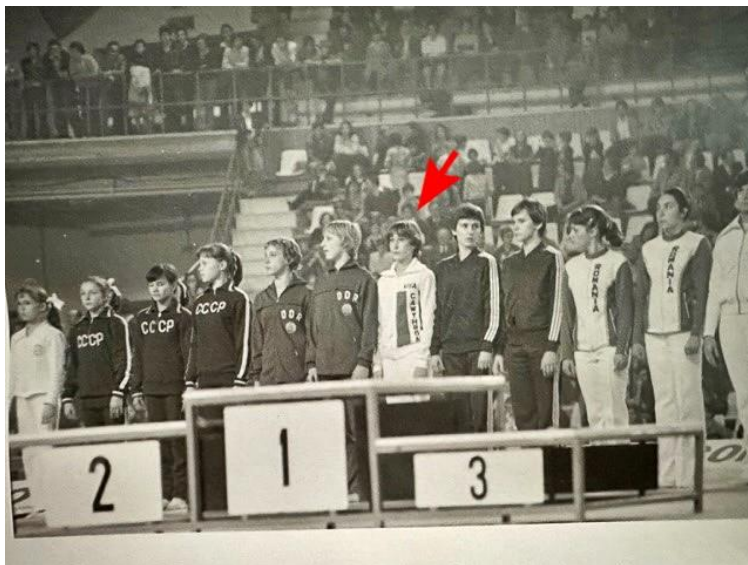
*Lisa... 5th grade*

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

Clearly, representing my country, the United States of America in international competitions. It was even more rewarding to be atop the podium and hear my National Anthem.



*Ariel cartwheel on the balance beam, 1978 World Trials;  
photo by Rich Kenney*



*1977 World Cup Oviedo, Spain*

### ***What led you to take up photography?***

My father always loved still photography. He loved sunsets, birds, landscapes, and gymnastics. He always had his camera close by. He taught me so much.



## *In the Spotlight - - continued*

*Was there any event that you attended as a photographer that stands out in your memory?*

International Gymnastics Hall of Fame 2022. Paul Ziert asked me to please join in the festivities and to bring my camera. I honestly must give him full credit for getting my love back for the sport of Artistic Gymnastics.

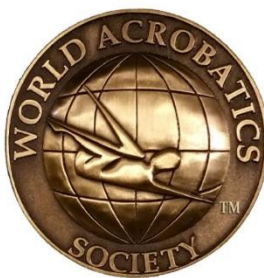


*Lisa with members of the American Gymnastics Alumni Association*



*Lisa and Nadia Comăneci (their friendship goes back to 1977)*

Thank you, Lisa!  
We look forward to seeing you at the WAS  
2023 Congress & Hall of Fame Banquet  
in Las Vegas!



**Join us!**



**World Acrobatics Society  
2023 Congress & Banquet**

September 8-10, 2023  
Tuscany Suites & Casino, Las Vegas  
[worldacro.com](http://worldacro.com)





# Bobby Dickson's Comedy Corner



*Bobby Dickson is a World Acrobatics Society 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient and was a diving, tumbling, trampoline, and gymnastics champion. He recently retired from 40+ year career performing comedy acrobatics throughout five continents.*



**If you ever need some one-liners or ice-breakers for your next get-together with acrobatic friends - - Bobby's got you covered !!! - - with his collection of "acrobatic jibs & jabs."**

Springboard diving was invented by pirates so they could show off while walking the plank

Did you hear about the new act with Eastern European acrobats?  
...They're calling themselves 'Czechs and Balances'

What's an acrobat's favorite seasoning? ...Somersault

Why do people buy so many trampolines during March Madness sales? ...It's spring-time.

What do acrobats like to drink?  
...Anything in a tumbler

What does the acrobat do when he doesn't like the situation?  
...He flips out



Do you ever just want to do a backflip somewhere but remember you shouldn't?  
... Me neither!

What do you call a hand balancer covered in clay?  
...An adobe acrobat

What do gymnasts, acrobats, and bananas have in common?  
...They can all do the splits

I decided that I wanted to join a Gymnastics club...  
...I had to bend over backwards just to get in!

My tryout for the Olympic diving team was a flop  
...But I made quite a splash with the judges

**You know you're a gymnast when...**

- You spend more time on your hands than your feet.
- It isn't rude to yell "Stick it!"
- Your deductions have nothing to do with your parents' tax returns.
- You didn't have to take science class to understand gravity (and how to defy it!)
- Your pullovers aren't knits or fleece.
- You could flip out at any time!
- You don't keep your flip flops in your closet.
- Scales don't have anything to do with your weight.
- You don't keep money in your vaults.
- Your world is upside down more than right side up ... and that's okay!
- You didn't fall... the floor just needed a hug.

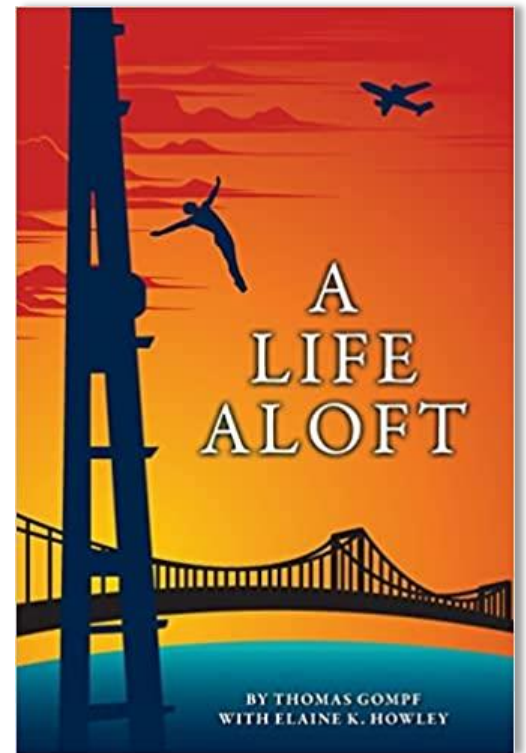


## Books by WAS Legends



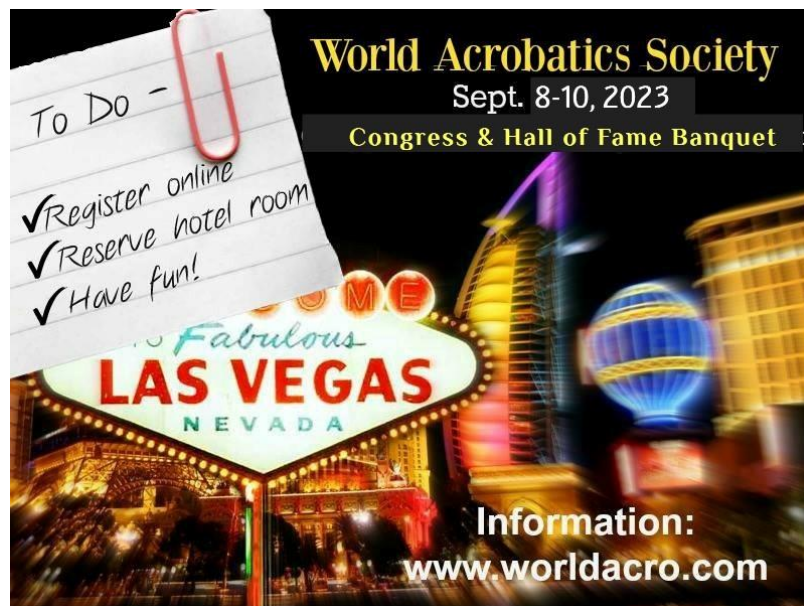
**"Had Trampoline .... Did Travel!"**  
by Ron Munn, World Acrobatics  
Society 2001 Legend.  
[Available on Amazon.](#)

*"My travels and adventures while  
helping introduce the sport of  
trampoline throughout the world."*



**"A Life Aloft"**  
by Thomas Gompf, World Acrobatics  
Society 2001 Legend.  
[Available on Amazon.](#)

*"From champion diver at the 1964  
Olympics to commercial airline pilot,  
Gompf reflects back on what he's  
learned from pushing himself and the  
sport of diving to ever greater heights."*



**World Acrobatics Society** [worldacro.com](http://www.worldacro.com)