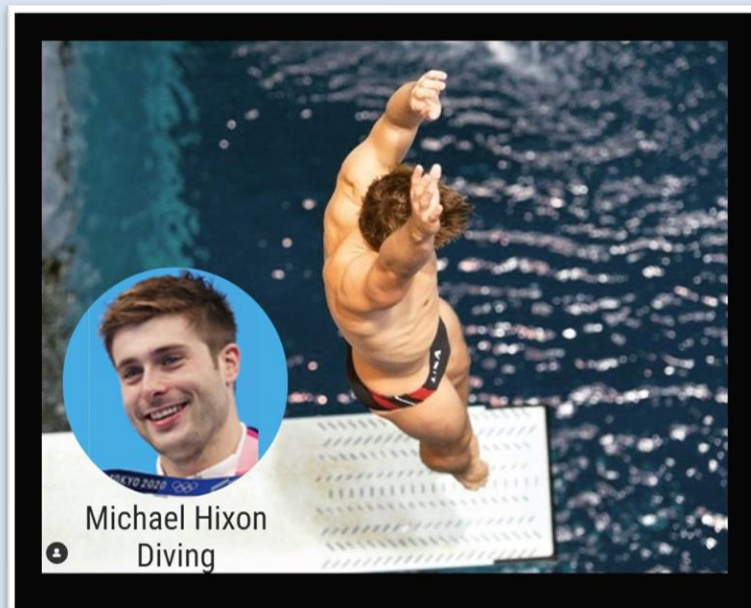


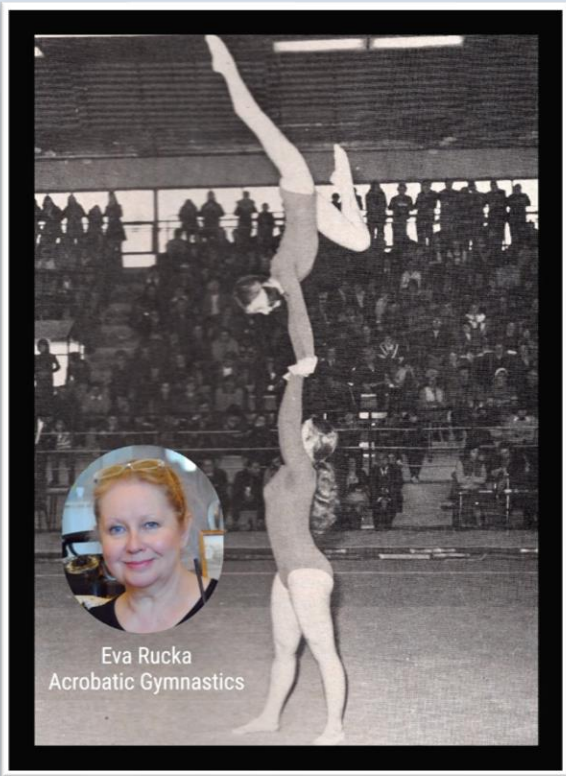


May 2024
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Editor: Dagmar Munn

World Acrobatics Society NEWSLETTER

Hall of Fame — Class of 2024





Eva Rucka
Acrobatic Gymnastics



Hardy Fink
Lifetime
Achievement
Award

FIG AGE GROUP PR
FOR ARTISTIC GY



David Jacobs
Charlie Pond
Service Award

FIG
Gallery of Legends - Hall of Fame 2019



Dave Black
Golden Achievement
Award



Caballero Family
Professional Acrobatics

THE HIGHLIGHT of every World Acrobatics Society Congress is certainly the gala Hall of Fame Banquet and watching the inductees receive their well-deserved recognition

JOIN US in honoring these talented individuals at the World Acrobatics Society 2024 Congress & Hall of Fame-Gallery of Legends Banquet, September 6-8, 2024, at the Tuscany Suites & Casino in Las Vegas. *Event details will be announced soon..*

We look forward to celebrating and welcoming the class of 2024!

ACROBATIC GYMNASTICS & CHEER – Eva Rucka

ACTION SPORTS - John Heiney

ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS – Vladimir Artemov

DIVING – Michael Hixon

PROFESSIONAL ACROBATICS – Flying Caballero Family

TRAMPOLINE/TUMBLING – Dian Nissen

GOLDEN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD – Dave Black

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD – Hardy Fink

CHARLIE POND SERVICE AWARD - David Jacobs

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*2023
Congress
Memories*

Photos by
Lisa Cawthon,
Rich Kenney, and
WAS members





"The GLAMOUR of Showbiz" *...How I Ended up in an African Circus*

I love showbiz!

It's always glamorous, fun, and, you get to stay in the best of accommodations. ...Awww, who am I kidding? Showbiz is hard work. But funny things do happen along the way - - leading to many great memories. Here's one about the time I had a case of the "African stomach flu."

In 1973, World Acrobatics Society Legend Larry Griswold taught me his signature comedy trampoline act. One year later, in 1974, Larry invited the owner of the Boswell-Wilkie Circus, a traveling circus in South Africa, to come see me while he was scouting acts in America.

See me, turned out to be me having to audition for Mr. Wilkie, and, the audition happened in Larry's backyard in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Yup, in January. In a foot of snow and below zero temperatures.

It was so cold that, when Larry pushed the button on the cassette player to start up my music, only a few seconds of garbled sound came out before the tape stopped, completely frozen!

The metal bars on my diving tower were so cold that I thought my hands were going to stick to them plus, the trampoline bed was super-stiff.

I kept reminding myself, "*Showbiz IS fun. Showbiz IS fun. Showbiz sure IS fun*"

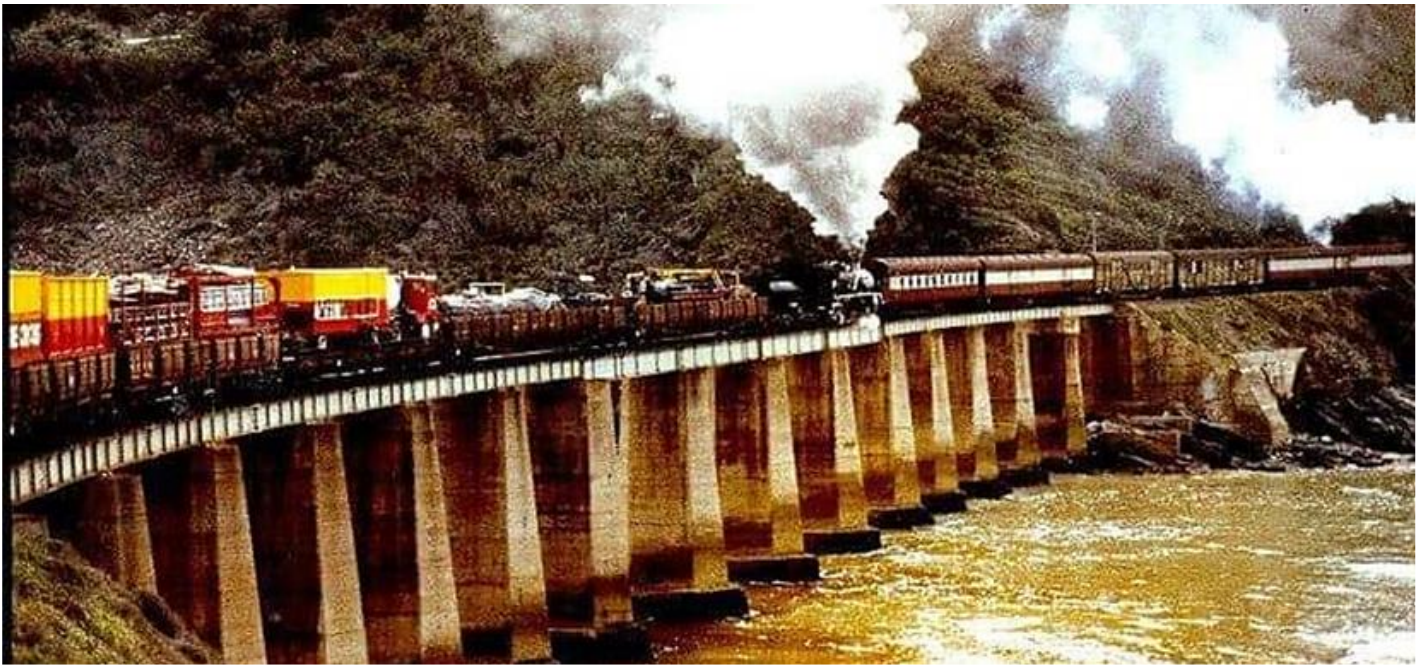
Never the less, I continued bouncing and Mr. Wilkie stated that if I could perform the whole act under those circumstances, he was sure that he would have no problems with me in Africa. He signed the contract right then and there. And a few weeks later, I was on my way to South Africa. This would be my very first *gig* outside of the U.S.



Bobby's fellow performers taking a break. Photo by Bobby Dickson

I lived with the other performers on the circus train, sharing a 6'6" x 6'6" two-person compartment. In it was one small sink with a gas cooker and small gas fridge - - both hooked up to a large gas bottle, along with a self-built couch that pulled out into a bed at night. All the luxuries of home in one small space. And for the entire 12 months. What more could you possibly want?

(Comedy Corner Continued)



The Boswell-Wilkie Circus train traveling to its next destination. Photo by Bobby Dickson

Oh, yes, and only one toilet and no shower per train wagon of 8 compartments. It doesn't get more glamorous than that!

The train was pulled by a steam locomotive, so everything was constantly covered in coal-dust. Some mornings I'd wake up in blackface!

On the circus grounds was a 3'3" x 6'6" room in a trailer where my trampoline, diving board and tower were kept whilst traveling. When they were unloaded, that space then served as my dressing room. More luxury! When would it ever stop?

On this particular day, I had developed a bad case of stomach flu and was standing behind the circus tent, in costume -- throwing up my guts!



Inside the Boswell-Wilkie Circus tent. Photo courtesy Boswell-Wilkie Circus

Suddenly, Mr. Wilkie was standing nearby. As I turned to look at him, he asked, "What are you doing?" To which I replied, "Warming up."

He then asked what was wrong and when I told him, he said: "You're not planning on performing today, are you?" Between several more gags and coughs I replied, "That's what you pay me to do."

"Look," he exclaimed, "I don't want you doing a double twist on your trampoline and spraying the people in my most expensive seats!"

That's when he told me to go back to the train and to take as many days as I needed to get healthy again. I did, and Mr. Wilkie even paid me for those days, disregarding the normal circus rule of 'No Play...No Pay'.

Mr. Wilkie was one of the best circus directors that I ever worked for. I thoroughly enjoyed my tour all throughout southern Africa. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime adventure and, I even got paid for it.

Now that *IS* glamorous!

Till next time,
Bobby Dickson



~ EPILOGUE ~

Dear Reader, please take a quick look at the first photo in my story. It's the photo of my fellow performers taking a break outside the circus train cars. The group includes the Stegul family from Denmark, who were in the show that was just finishing when I arrived for the new show in 1974. So, during the transition that took a couple of weeks, we got to know each other quite well.

Jacki Stegul, along with his older brother and two sisters did an incredible acrobatic act on ladders. The whole family also performed a clown act plus, Jacki's wife Ulla, assisted her father who was a very famous Danish magician.



Photo courtesy of Jacki Stegul

Following my time in the circus, I ended up living with one of the Stegul sisters in Copenhagen, right across the street from Jacki, his wife Ulla, and her father and mother. Years later, when I was performing in the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, I proudly introduced the Steguls to my wife Anoushka. They welcomed her with open arms.

In May of 2024, when Jacki and his wife visited us for a few days, we celebrated 50-years of friendship.



Photo courtesy of Bobby Dickson

We shared many stories and happy memories.

And of course, dedicated many toasts to our longtime friendship and history together.

Bobby Dickson is a WAS 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.

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Society Board
for 2024



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Federation and the U.S. Ski and
Snowboard Association
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Representing: Action Sports



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Representing: Artistic
Gymnastics



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