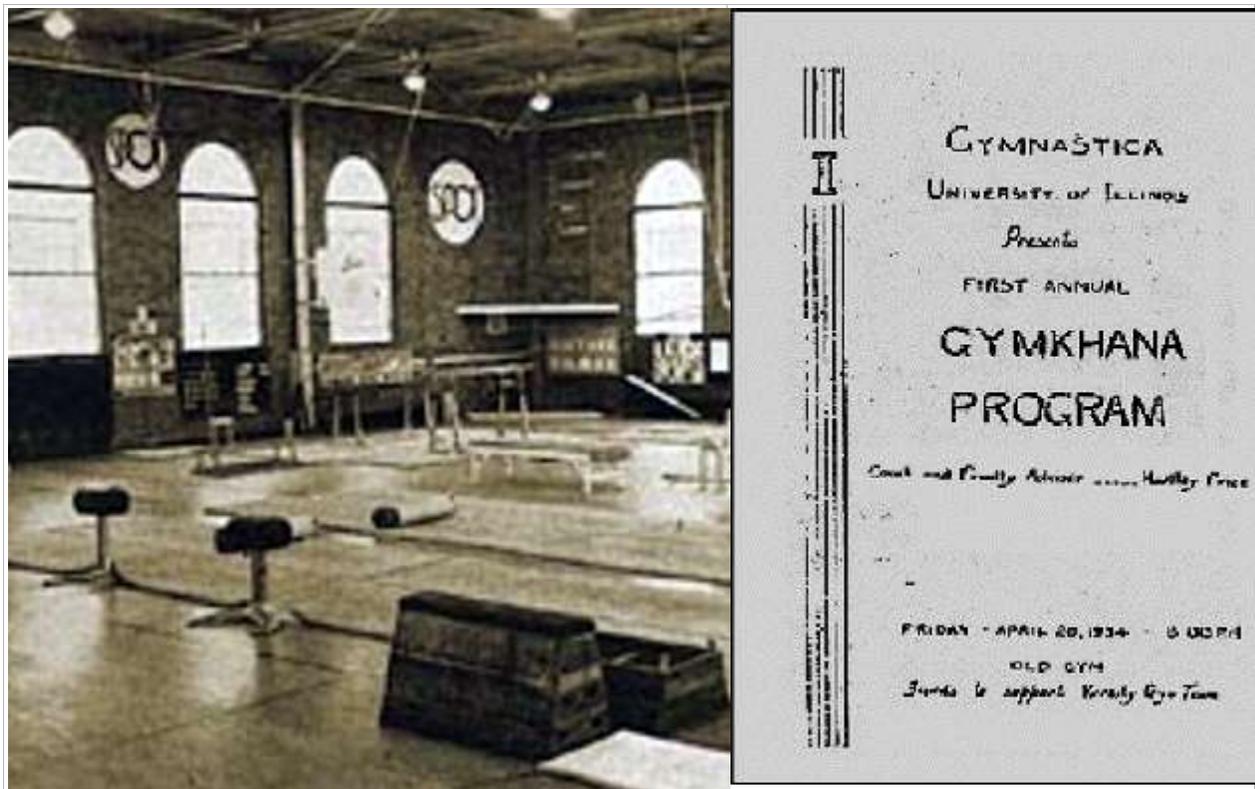


WAS - Gymnastics Legend Hartley D'Oyley Price

2001 Honoree



Coined the terms, "Spotting" and "Gymkana"



It's not very often that a supplementary definition of a very common word can be traced to one person. The gymnastics term, "Spot," was devised by Dr. Hartley Price, the only collegiate men's coach to win national NCAA team titles at two institutions (University of Illinois and Florida State University). At Illinois, Price painted large, yellow spots, four feet in diameter, on the walls of the gymnasium with the word "Spot," printed inside to remind his gymnasts that safety was of paramount importance. The "Spot" on the wall became associated with "hands on" assistance and finally evolved into the verb "to spot" or the noun, "spotting." Spotting was demonstrated in Price's

widely adopted book published by the US Naval Institute in 1944. The term stuck and it is commonly used by everyone in the sport in the United States. The term is also used in the sport of weightlifting.

After serving an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering in his native Australia and against the wishes of his father, he yearned to attend the YMCA Training School in Springfield, MA. He learned about the school from instructors at the local YMCA in Brisbane and undoubtedly heard about Leslie Judd since the latter was an outstanding swimmer and Indian Club champion in Australia. Judd was appointed coach/director of gymnastics at Springfield in 1921. Although Price completed his apprenticeship, he had not finished his secondary school education. He embarked for the USA at age 20 and went to Springfield, completed his HS equivalency and graduated in 1927. Judd recommended Price to a former Springfield gymnast, Ray Heidloff, then gymnastics coach and member of the faculty at the University of Illinois. Price accepted the position and became the University's first soccer coach producing three All-Americans between 1927 and 1933. In 1930, he succeeded Heidloff as gymnastics coach and completed yet another degree in Education.

Price was the most successful recruiter of his day. He did everything he could to build and maintain his teams at a time when money was scarce. He found living quarters for his gymnasts that were austere at times and located jobs for those who needed to work their way through college. The "Juddmen," as Price and other Springfield men were sometimes known, found collegiate positions in every corner of the United States including California, Texas, Illinois, Minnesota and Florida. Like Price, many of these men founded gymnastics troupes and presented shows to help raise money for their programs. Price learned about gymnastics exhibitions from Coach Judd at Springfield where the "Home Show," featuring gymnastics, is still an annual event. In the early 1930s, Price founded the University of Illinois "Gymkana." (1) Gymkana shows were among the most popular events on campus during Price's years with the "Illini." He amassed four NCAA team titles there and was sought after as a coach by a number of institutions. He accepted a challenging position at Florida State University (FSU), formerly an all women's college, in 1948 having completed a Ph.D. program at New York University. At FSU, he founded the gymnastics team and a Gymkana program to support team activities. He entered the men in various Southern AAU events where they frequently triumphed as a team and also won many individual titles. The "Seminoles" won two NCAA team titles under Price and the Gymkana had a national reputation. FSU dropped its highly successful gymnastics program in 1961 but it continued as a club program under the Gymkana until Price retired in 1971. The dismantling of gymnastics was the sad result of the expansion of, and emphasis on, football in Southern Colleges and Universities. "Doc" Price's philosophy was simple, "Recruit the best gymnasts in the country and they'll coach each other." Many of his gymnasts affirm this position stating that frequently "Doc" would not show up at practice due to the many activities he was planning and organizing. In *The Spirit of Gymnastics*, Tom Conkling, a former Price gymnast, chronicles his colorful coach's career at Illinois and FSU. Many of his gymnasts followed in his footsteps organizing programs and coaching throughout the United States. David Field who earlier competed for Price at Illinois founded the University of Maryland Gymkana. Field's Gymkana flourishes today with shows booked throughout Maryland encouraging children to avoid drugs and participate in healthy, vigorous activities like gymnastics. Eight of Price's gymnasts have been elected to the National Gymnastics Hall of Fame among whom are Joe Giallombardo, the first NCAA all-around champion and pioneer in high school gymnastics in the Chicago suburbs and Bill Roetzheim, twice an Olympian and three times the national AAU all-around champion who served on the FIG's Men's Technical Committee. Other Hall of Fame honorees are Jack Miles, Don Holder, Jamile Ashmore, Paul Fina and Don Wilderoter, the latter training many female judges in New York.

In 1949, Price established the Tallahassee Tumbling Tots (TTT) after an exhibition by Larry Griswold, the latter known as the "Clown Prince of the Trampoline." Griswold helped George Nissen to develop the "Flashfold" trampoline and is a member of the WAS "Gallery of Honor." The program flourished and was adopted by the Recreation Department of the city of Tallahassee in 1953. At the time, more than 1,000 children had participated. The program continued to grow and is today housed in the Randy Trousdell Gymnastics Center in Tallahassee. Trousdell was an FSU gymnast. Price's wife "Billie" was his constant companion and defender throughout his career. He considered her an integral part of his teams' successes. He will be recalled as a pioneer in many aspects of gymnastics development in the United States and a noted physical educator. Price was a member of the original class of honorees of the USA Gymnastics' Hall of Fame (1959) and directed research projects for the National Assoc. of Collegiate Gymnastics Coaches and was honored by the organization three times. He served on the National Olympic Gymnastics Committee for two decades.

1902 - 1977.

Price's Olympians



Bill Roetzheim, 1952 (he made the 1948 Olympic team while a student at the University of

Illinois – Navy Pier branch and later became the coach at the branch renamed "Chicago Circle");

- Fernando Lecuona, 1948 (Cuban Olympian);
- Raphael Lecuona, 1948, 1952 & 1956 (Cuban Olympian);
- Don Holder, 1952 (holder won the last NAAU club swinging event);
- Lennart Malmlin, 1952 (Swedish Olympian);
- Gail Sontgerath, 1960 (assisted Price in the development of the first women's team at FSU);
- Carrie Englert (Zimmerman), 1976 (TTT);
- Ron Galimore, 1980 (TTT);
- Brandy Johnson, 1988 (TTT).

Price's National Team Championships

- NCAA Team titles at Illinois – 1939 - 1942; at FSU, 1951 & 1952
- AAU Team titles at Illinois – 1940, 1941 (tied with NY Bohemian Sokol); at FSU 1951, 1953 (Gymkana) and 1955 (Gymkana).

The following inscription attributed to Dr. Price appears on the annual Nissen-Emery award given to the nation's most outstanding senior collegiate male gymnast...

"The true champion seeks excellence physically, mentally, socially and morally."

References

- Davis, Bruce, "Dr. Hartley Price." (click here to read his article.)
- Judd, Leslie, et al, *Exhibition Gymnastics*. New York, NY: Association Press, 1969.
- Price, Hartley, et al, *Gymnastics and Tumbling*. Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1944.
- Conkling, Tom (Edited by Jim Baley), *The Spirit of Gymnastics – The Biography of Hartley D'Oyley Price*. Tallahassee, FL: Durra-Print, Inc., 1982.
- Garvey, Richard C., *The Springfield College Family Album – Notes and scenes from our First Century 1885-1985*. Springfield, MA: Springfield College, 1984 pp. 160 (p. 77 Price and Ralph Piper, later a coach at the University of Minnesota are shown with members of the Springfield Exhibition Team.)
- University of Maryland Gymkana. (click here to access their website.)
- Tallahassee Tumbling Tots. (click here to access their website.)

(1) The term "Gymkhana," found in most dictionaries refers to special equestrian shows where horses are put through their paces and special events are held. Price simply removed the "h" since according to him he was training men, not horses. See the first Gymkana program designed by Price below. Note that the "h" was still included in the program but then was extracted in the next few years.