

WAS - Trampoline & Tumbling Legend

George Paul

2001 Honoree



The First Triple Full? Probably!

Born in San Francisco in 1914, George Paul was bouncing on a trampoline at the age of six when his father, a former circus performer, built a trampoline in their back yard with a wooden frame, fisherman's net for the bed and inner tubes salvaged from truck tires to fit from the frame to net bed. George had previously experienced some tumbling and now he found trampolining a fun and a more exciting thing to do.

When George was twelve he joined a Boys Club where they had a trampoline constructed with a metal frame, a canvas bed and rubber of inner tubes to provide bounce. The rubber of inner tubes was soon converted to a type of shock cord or bungee cord for attachment from the bed to the frame. Steel springs were also tried but they did not at the time seem satisfactory. The Boys Club offered instruction in tumbling and pyramid building. George Paul got his first taste of show business as the Boys Club members performed at various civic functions. At high school George Paul formed his first amateur trio trampoline act known as the Paul Trio with trio members Emmett Collins and George Doris.

By the time George Paul was eighteen, he was performing a triple twister on trampoline; a skill that he had not seen anyone else perform. Paul believes he might have been the first one to execute the triple full. On graduation from high school the following year, he formed a new professional act with two girls. About four years later George decided to do a two-person act with Lorraine Young, one of the girls from the former trio. George Paul eventually married Lorraine. Their act became known as Paul and Paulette. In order to facilitate the act, Paul's father constructed the first known foldable, lightweight, modern trampoline in the year 1934. The trampoline was only 4 feet x 8 feet which could easily fit in nightclubs, hotels and other limited space performance areas. The trampoline was chrome plated and folded very easily and rolled away in a manner of seconds.

After a stint in the service for WWII and a divorce from Lorraine in 1946, George Paul formed anew trio called the Jumping Jacks, with Bob Duprey and June Schaller. The Jumping Jack act lasted about a year. George Paul then formed his most well-known trampoline act called Paul & Paulette - The Bellhop and the French Maid, with June Schaller. June and George Paul were eventually married. Then when George had the unfortunate experience of breaking his ankle, June's brothers, John and Tony, stepped in to perform as the Paul and Paulette Trio under George Paul's guidance. When George was healed and able to perform again, Jimmy Garner who was the first National A.A.U. Trampoline Champion in 1949, joined the act for several years with George and June. June's brothers went on to perform their own successful act for many years.

When George and June broke up, followed by a divorce, George Paul formed a new act with two women; Donna Sneddon, a Far Western Diving Champion and Delores Dixon, one of the foremost female trampoline performers. Delores did a double back at the age of eleven. She also did double twisters, front full and a half in swing as well as all the twisting double backs. She even performed a back full fliffis when she matured and was older.

A terrible tragedy occurred when George was enjoying body surfing in the Hawaiian surf after performing in a show in the celebration of Hawaii's Statehood in 1954. He broke his neck and suffered two weeks of complete paralysis. Finally, feeling and mobility began to return to George's body. With great patience and perseverance, he overcame the paralysis but his performing days on the trampoline were over. George Paul continued to manage trampoline acts and shows successfully from 1956 to 1960.

During his many years of performing, George and his partners worked for the top booking agents and performed in all the best places in the U.S.; some of the bookings included The Palace Theater, Radio City Music Hall, Golden Gate Theater, The Ed Sullivan Show, a traveling stint with the Spike Jones Musical Comedy Show, The Horace Heidt Show, Las Vegas Strip Hotels, The Palmer House, The Coconut Grove and The Biltmore. In addition to performing in trampoline acts, George was the bartender on Peter Gunn TV show and a stand-in for Ted Knight on the Mary Tyler Moore Show. George Paul also performed a few movie stunt jobs including a very high dive doubling for Esther Williams in Jupiter's Daughter.

Years after he had performed his trampoline act, people remembered him and his act with great admiration. Show business was always under Paul's skin. He performed into his late eighties under the name of Danny Davis with his own musical trio and jazz group playing the vibes and singing with his present wife, Frances who also sings and plays the bass.

There is no doubt that George Paul was a talented pioneer and contributor in the art of trampoline performance in show business. George Paul died in December of 2007.