

WORLD ACROBATICS SOCIETY 2013 WINTER NEWSLETTER



CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGENDS

The World Acrobatics Society inducted its Class of 2013 Legends September 18 at the Circus Circus Hotel and Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada. Above in the front row from left to right: Pedro Reis, Professional Acrobatics; Dolly Jacobs, Professional Acrobatics; Christina Seufert Sholtis, Diving; and Todd Smith, Diving. In the back row left to right: David Curtis, Trampoline & Tumbling; Jerry Wright, Contributor; Rusty Mitchell, Artistic Gymnastics; Carrie Englert Zimmerman, Lifetime Achievement; and Richie Gaona, Professional Acrobatics. 2013 Legends not pictured are: Mark Calderon, Trampoline & Tumbling; Paul Swafford, Contributor; Trace Worthington, Extreme Sports; and Bob Fenner, Lifetime Achievement.

CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND JERRY WRIGHT CONTRIBUTOR

Jerry Wright earned a third place on parallel bars and a fifth place tumbling in what was to become the Illinois State High School State Championships. The only gym equipment Carmi high school possessed in 1952 was a set of parallel bars and a tumbling mat.

In 1957, Jerry was Indiana University's team captain and he lead the team in scoring at the Big Ten Championships competing on pommel horse, parallel bars, trampoline and tumbling. Jerry also is the recipient of the L. G. Balfour Award for bringing honor and distinction to Indiana University. Wright served as assistant coach at IU in 1958-59.

Jerry coached the club gymnasts in 1960-61 while he was in the US Army. After his military stint, Jerry was in California competing for the Los Angeles Turners Gymnastic Team in 1961-62 on six events while he served as a volunteer assistant coach at University of Southern California, the same year that USC won it's only NCAA team title.

Beginning in 1963, Jerry taught physical education classes for 25 years at San Francisco State University and coached the men's gymnastics team for 18 years while achieving the rank of Full Professor. He directed one of the most successful NCAA Division II Championships in 1973 and even coached the women's team.

Wright's most significant contributions to gymnastics are in the fields of judging and writing. Jerry is the founder of the National Gymnastics Judges Association (NGJA). In his efforts to standardize judging on a national and international level, he pioneered the dissemination of information about the science of judging. He served on the NGJA committees that produced its original constitution and established criteria and guidelines for the Frank Cumiskey Gymnastics Judges Hall of Fame.

Wright has judged over 1100 meets through a thirty year career. The meets include fifteen USA Nationals, eleven NCAA Championships, and over twenty international competitions. Jerry was the first NGJA West Technical Director and he served on the panel of experts for the first FIG Judges Course in Tucson, Arizona, in 1967.

Jerry worked as the compiler and publisher of the NCAA weekly statistics reports for eleven years, initiated the "Gymnast of the Week Award," created the judges guidelines report, and designed the NGJA dress uniform. Additionally, Wright served two terms as the Secretary of the NCAA Rules Committee, created the "controlled warm-up" procedure, and contributed numerous articles to several gymnastics publications for over a quarter century. Jerry has received the Carmi High School Hall of Fame Award, the USAG Lifetime Achievement Award, the CGA Life Member Award, and the NGJA Hall of Fame Award.



CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND PAUL SWAFFORD CONTRIBUTOR



Paul Swafford founded the Kansas City Trampoline Team in 1972. Since then, Paul produced 23 USA Senior Team Members, 33 World Age-Group Team Members, 115 National Champions, 334 Regional Champions, 2 World Champions, and had athletes set five World Records. The Kansas City Trampoline Team has competed in 18 foreign countries.

Swafford has been the USA Team Coach to the World Championships, the World Games, and the Pan American Championships multiple years. He served as US representative to the FIT from 1976 until 1983 and again from 1986 until 1989. He was the Milton Davis Award Trampoline Coach of the Year in 1975, 1978, 1982, and 1990.

Paul received the American Trampoline & Tumbling Association Master of Sport in 1990, the USA Master of Sport in 2012, and he was inducted into the USA Gymnastics Hall of Fame in 2012 as a coach. He has served as Missouri Director for Trampoline & Tumbling and he chaired the USA Gymnastics Hall of Fame Selection Committee.

Paul created the Nissen-Bollinger Mini Trampoline Coach of the Year Award to recognize senior elite coaches in the United States. He has an international judges rating and has taught an international judges course. Swafford has judged the World Championships, the World Games, the World Age Group Championships and various international events.

Swafford is a former USOC delegate representing tumbling and trampoline. He is a USOC Services Seminar participant. He filed original papers to become a USOC recognized sport. He worked with the USOC President to plan a resident athletic program.

Paul coached Karl Heger, Rich Kargus, Richard Hartman, and Lisa McKinney; all Senior Elite National Champions on trampoline. He coached World Cup Tumbling Champion Brad Davis and World Cup Double Mini Age Group Champion Hally Piontek.

CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND TRACE WORTHINGTON EXTREME SPORTS



Trace Worthington developed his love for aerial tricks on his backyard trampoline and wanted to follow in the footsteps of his late grandfather, Harry Worthington, who competed in Track and Field at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. Trace became a member of two US Olympic teams, Albertville 1992 and Lillehammer 1994, competing in freestyle aerials and also moguls in 1994. Worthington was the first male in US history to perform a quadruple twisting triple back flip on snow in competition. His freestyle skiing career includes 37 World Cup victories and 11 National titles. During the 1994-95 season, Trace claimed two World Championships gold medals. It was the first time that anyone achieved double World Champion titles. Worthington was named "US Freestyle Skier of the Year" by *Ski Racer Magazine* four years in a row (1992, 93, 94, 95). In 1993, *Ski Racer* dubbed him "International Skier of the Year." Trace participated in the 1998 and 1999 Winter X Games. He retired from competition due to vertigo problems.

Worthington launched his broadcasting career in 1997 on Fox as a reporter on the Sprint Bumps and Jumps Competition. Trace worked for TNT covering the 1998 Nagano Olympics and in the 2002 and 2006 Olympic Games for NBC. Trace expanded his sports commentary ability by covering the sport of trampoline as the lead analyst for the Athens Olympics in 2004. He also reported on Canoe, Kayak, and Rowing.

For more than a decade, Worthington has worked in sports commentary. He is the lead host for CBS Sports coverage of the 48-Straight, Jeep King of the Mountain Series featuring Skiercross, Snowboardcross, Half-pipe, and Mountain Bike Racing. In addition, Trace has worked for NBC, CBS Sports, ESPN X-Games, and Versus as a host, reporter, and analyst; covering other events such as Freeskiing, Celebrity Events, US Paintball Championships, the Purina Incredible Dog Challenge, and Pro Beach Volleyball.

Worthington is a resident of Park City, Utah, and is the President of 'Flying Ace Productions, Inc.' His entertainment company choreographs and produces extreme aerial shows during which expert freestyle skiers and snowboarders use trampolines and large ramps at the Utah Olympic Park to entertain various corporate groups. The "Ski Superstar" division of Flying Ace line up Olympians and other prominent athletes to ski with individuals and various corporate groups.

CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND CARRIE ENGLERT ZIMMERMAN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Zimmerman is the owner of Zimmerman Agency, an advertising, public relations, and interactive firm. According to *Florida Trend Magazine*, Zimmerman Agency is the largest independent hospitality agency in the US and one of the largest women owned companies in Florida. The agency touts billings of 85 million dollars with clients in New York, Moscow, Beijing, Hamburg, Hong Kong, and Dubai.

Additionally, Carrie has conceived and nurtured the re-introduction of Coca Cola, the world's most popular soft drink. The agency has helped launch numerous brands and initiatives of revered hotel chains such as Marriott and Intercontinental. The agency has helped in formation of co-brand partnership commitments between some of the top American companies such as American Airlines, Citigroup Diners Club, Continental Tires, and Ford Motor Company. Zimmerman re-engineered the image of Bertram Yacht and helped the validation celebration of NASA's "Man's First Moon Walk." Carrie is sought out for her creativity and innovation in her industry and has had many successful speaking engagements in global marketing in many foreign countries. Microsoft named Carrie "One of Americas Top Savviest Businesswomen."



Carrie Englert Zimmerman was a member of the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games Women's US Gymnastics Team. During her international competition career she was voted team captain many times and performed in competition and exhibitions for the US in many foreign countries. She competed collegiately at Clarion College of Pennsylvania. Carrie scored perfect tens on balance beam and floor exercise in the 1976 USA Championships. She trained in Oregon at the National Academy of Artistic Gymnastics with Dick Mulvihill after having initiated her gymnastic training in Tallahassee, Florida, as a member of the "Tallahassee Tumbling Tots."

CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND

TODD SMITH

DIVING

Todd Smith has had a distinguished career in the sport of diving as a competitor, coach, and administrator; all at a high level. Smith is a graduate of Ohio State University where he dove for Ron O'Brien. Todd is a three-time NCAA All-American and the 1972 NCAA National Champion on the one-meter springboard. He was Co-captain of his swim and dive team his Senior year. Todd attended law school in California and continued to dive as a member of the US National Diving Team through 1976 and was coached by Glenn McCormick. The Mission Viejo Nadadores hired Todd Smith and Ron O'Brien as diving coaches for 1977-78. Next, Smith was hired by the University of Tennessee where he coached several national and international champion divers in 1979-80.



In 1981, Todd took the position as Executive Director of USA Diving for an unprecedented 27 years. He developed a budget more than ten times its original size and initiated the US Diving Foundation to help sustain funds for diving. With the development of a Trust Fund, Todd helped bring US Diving from amateur status to more open funding for its athletes so they could compete longer and extend their careers. He solicited and negotiated sponsor relationships with Speedo America, United Airlines, General Motors, Bank of America, Texaco, Colorado Time Systems, Phillips Petroleum, McDonalds, Olin Corporation, Alamo Rent A Car, and Pan American Airlines.

Smith established a trusting and supporting relationship with the United States Olympic Committee and developed a program which continues to bring funding and assistance to diving. Todd budgeted for and oversaw the operation of the International Diving Grand Prix, the world's annual premier diving competition. Todd Smith wisely hired Ron O'Brien, his former diving coach and nine-time Olympic diving coach as National Technical and High Performance Director.

Though unusual for a staff member of a volunteer-driven organization to receive an award, Smith was honored with the inaugural Phil Boggs Memorial Award which recognizes an individual who has achieved individual excellence in diving and has given back a part of himself to insure the sports continuation and success.

CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND DAVID CURTIS TRAMPOLINE & TUMBLING



David Curtis won the Farbachshouster Cup in Germany. The competition is the equivalent to the World Championship for those under 18. Curtis was the Runner-up to David Jacobs in the 1967 and the 1968 World Championships. In 1968, David was also the World Synchronized Champion Runner-up.

Curtis won four British Championships (1966, 67, 69, & 75), five British Synchronized Championships, and two Junior British Championships in 1962 and 1963. He won eleven consecutive Welsh Championships and four Junior Welsh Championships. David won the French Open Championship in 1968 and 1969. He also has a bronze medal from the European Championships.

David worked for Nissen International for ten years as the Service and Installation Manager based in the United Kingdom. When he left Nissen, David established his own company, Sportfix Ltd., servicing and installing sporting equipment. When David retired from his company, he handed the reigns over to his son in 1989.

Curtis has been a member of Rotary International since 1991 and was Club President in 2001 and 2002. He completed the assembly training in San Diego in January of 2013 and became District Governor for District 1150 South Wales in the United Kingdom.

Curtis feels a debt of gratitude to Ted Blake and George Nissen as well as to school teacher Des Jones for seeing his potential and sending him to coach Albert Duggan who nurtured him into a world-class competitor.

CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND CHRISTINA SEUFERT SHOLTIS DIVING

Christina Seufert Sholtis participated in several sports before falling in love with diving. She excelled quickly making it to Senior Nationals while a senior in high school. Her collegiate career began at Clarion State under the tutelage of Don Leas. During summers she trained in Brandon, Florida with Dick Kimball. Chris already had Olympic aspirations after watching friend and mentor Micki King win a gold medal in the 1972 Munich Olympic Games. Coach Kimball told Chris he could put her on an Olympic team. Seufert made the difficult decision of transferring to the University of Michigan with Kimball to test his prediction. Seufert did not disappoint; she made the 1980 and 1984 US Olympic teams. She won a bronze medal in Los Angeles on the three-meter springboard in 1984. In addition, Chris was twice USA Diving three-meter national champion.



Chris's collegiate career includes being a Big Ten finalist in 1977 and 1978 on the one and three meter springboards, and the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) one and three meter champion in 1977, and finalist on both boards in 1978. She attended the World University Games to Sophia, Bulgaria, in 1977.

In 1976, Chris made her first national team that launched her international diving career. She traveled the world representing the United States and won coveted trophies such as the Swedish Cup on two occasions. She participated in the first dual meet against the People's Republic of China. In 1980, the Chinese came to the United States for a dual meet and Chris's ambassadorship to the People's Republic of China began that year when the Olympic Diving Team traveled to China for the first time for another dual meet and exhibitions throughout their country. In 1982 in Guayaquil, Ecuador, Seufert won the silver medal on the three-meter springboard.

Seufert's coaching career followed her diving career. She coached the Chelsea High School age group team in Michigan. She helped coach the University of Michigan age group and collegiate diving teams. Chris served as Athlete Representative for USA Diving from 1980-1982.

Seufert retired from diving competition at age 27. After working for Domino's Pizza, marriage, and a family; Chris returned to national and international diving as a judge. She judged the 2011 World Championships, the 2012 Olympic Games, and the 2013 World Championships of Barcelona, Spain. Seufert is on the USA Diving Board of Director and serves as Vice Chair of Administration. She is honored to give back to the sport that has thoroughly enriched her life.

CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND BOB FENNER LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Bob Fenner was an outstanding post World War II gymnast, trampolinist, and tumbler. George Nissen, who knew Bob in the Navy when they worked out together on the trampoline, recruited Bob out of college in Colorado to do a partner trampoline act. The partnership not only included performing, but also the design of gymnastics equipment, and in particular the trampoline. It was during this time period that trampoline design began to improve dramatically. Web beds, bed and frame attachment fittings, frame size, portability, and the mini trampoline were created and implemented.



In 1953 Bob left Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and opened his own company, Fenner Hamilton Co., in Denver, Colorado, after a short stay in Jefferson, Iowa, doing trampoline design with Bill Sorenson. The Gym Master Co., the name change due to incorporation, produced gymnastics, circus, and trampoline equipment of innovative design. Fenner patented some of his inventions. Most importantly for Fenner was the creation of the 7'x14' trampoline with springs, a one inch web bed, and portability on wheel standards. The 7'x14' size trampoline remains the world standard size for competition. In gymnastics equipment design, Fenner produced the first portable

horizontal bar and ring rig. The horizontal bar was adjustable. Fenner also produced the Spartan Uneven Parallel Bar with single side uprights and an adjustable low rail. In circus equipment design, Fenner produced a portable tight wire, a portable trapeze rig, a one finger stand, aerial hoops, and a portable tetterboard table. Fenner even designed the eight piece portable three-meter diving board made for Larry Griswold's famous comedy dive act.

Gym Master Co. and Fenner inadvertently helped trigger the "outside jump center" craze of the sixties. Gym Master, known for its diversity of trampolines of various sizes including the 'Jumbo' with a 10' x 20' bed size, had a showroom featuring all their models including pit trampolines. The community was invited to bounce on the various size trampolines after the business closed at 5PM. Patrons could bounce for 50 cents per hour.

Now in 2013, Fenner goes to work in his machine shop at Fenner Manufacturing and continues to build, design, and manufacture equipment for gymnastics, circus, and trampoline, just as he has done for more than a half a century. Yes, Bob is ninety and a Lifetime Achiever!

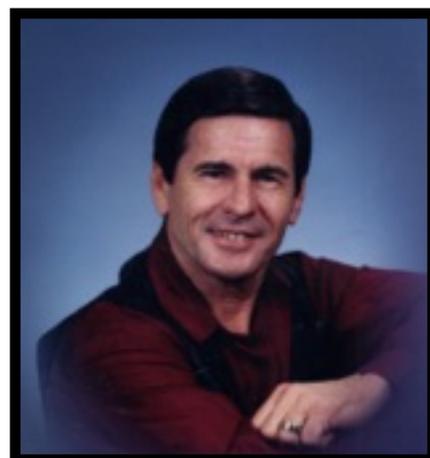
CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND

RUSTY MITCHELL

ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS

Russell “Rusty” Mitchell was a member of the 1964 US Men’s Olympic Gymnastics Team to Tokyo, Japan. Rusty was the first gymnast to perform a back double tuck somersault in Olympic Games competition. He was also first to perform a layout back somersault to a punch tuck front somersault dismount. Maybe he could do this because he was also NCAA Tumbling Champion in 1962, NAAU Tumbling Champion in 1964, and 1965 and the 1966 USGF Tumbling Champion.

Rusty’s gymnastics career began at Baldwin HS, Baldwin Park, California, with Coach John Draghi. Coach Draghi recommended that Rusty train with Bill Roy, an established tumbler and talented ventriloquist from the west coast. Draghi also had Mitchell watch film, work out with top gymnasts at Lincoln and Los Angeles High Schools such as Bill Tom, Charlie Sims, or the Beckner brothers, and practice tumbling moves outside into saw dust pits used for track and field.



During his three years at Southern Illinois University and with the coaching of Bill Meade, Rusty excelled in the all-around and tumbling. He led the Salukis to one NCAA Team Championship and two-second place team finishes while amassing ten NCAA All-America certificates and three NCAA titles. SIU was undefeated in dual meets the three years Mitchell was on the team. Mitchell also won three consecutive USGF all-around titles from 1964-1966. During his time at SIU, Mitchell received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in physical education.

Mitchell was the head gymnastics coach at New Mexico University for 33 years and achieved the rank of Assistant Professor before finally retiring from NMU in 2003. He posted a 71.3% winning percentage with 243 wins and 98 losses. His team won 11 Western Athletic Conference team championships out of a possible 18. Rusty coached 16 NCAA Champions and produced 53 All-Americans.

In international gymnastics, Mitchell was the assistant coach of the 1968 and 1972 US gymnastics Olympic teams, Chief of Mission of the 1974 US World Championship team to Varna, Bulgaria, head coach of the 1973 US World University Games Team to Moscow, Russia, and elected as USA Gymnastics Vice President in 1984. In total Rusty coached more than 15 US national, international, and collegiate teams from 1977 and 1993. He coached accomplished gymnasts like Jon Aitken, Stormy Eaton, Bob Manna, Jim Ivicsek, Chuck Walter, Steve Jennings, Chad Fox, Paul O’neil, Steve Weigel, Chris LaMorte, Blaz Puljic, Luis Lopez, and Matt Arnott.

CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND PEDRO REIS PROFESSIONAL ACROBATICS

Pedro Reis developed his acrobatics skills on the flying trapeze at the YMCA in his native Cape Town, South Africa, during the 70's. Pedro also helped inaugurate a comprehensive circus arts curriculum. Pedro took his performance skills on the road in the early 80's, playing many famous circuses in Europe. He was the featured artist in Circus Holiday and Circus Carre in Holland, Circus Nock in Switzerland, Circus Krone in Germany, Cirque d'Hiver in Paris, Circus Embell Riva in Italy, Circus Berny in Norway, and Denmark's famed Trivoli Theme Park. Reis re-created the "Survivors" in 1983, a four person aerial act without safety devices and this act was last seen in the US in 1952. While touring in Switzerland he was discovered by the owners of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Pedro came to the US in 1984 as the featured aerialist with *The Greatest Show on Earth*. It was during this time that Pedro met his future wife Dolly Jacobs and they became engaged. During a Cloud Swing performance at the New York Big Apple Circus in 1990, Pedro suffered a serious fall that nearly ended his career and delayed his marriage to Dolly.

Proving the saying that the show must go on, Dolly and Pedro created an aerial *pas de deux* aerial strap duet and performed in La Ronde Theme Park in Montreal, Takarazuka Family Land in Japan, World Christmas Circus in Stuttgart, and in Busch Gardens in Tampa, Florida.

When Reis and Jacobs returned to Sarasota, they founded The National Circus School of the Performing Arts in 1997. The school soon evolved into Circus Sarasota, a 501(c)(3) non-profit performing arts, educational, and community outreach organization dedicated to the preservation of the circus heritage in a community generally recognized as "home" to the circus in America. Pedro is the CEO of Circus Sarasota and is the producer of Circus Sarasota, *Cirque des Voix*, and the Ringling Museum's summer circus at the historic Asolo Theater. Commitments continue to grow. In 2011 Circus Sarasota was entrusted by the Sarasota County School Board with the administration and management of the Sailor Circus which is the oldest continuous youth circus in the US. Under Pedro's and Dolly's guidance, hundreds of elementary, junior high, and high school students are perfecting their acrobatic skills at Sarasota High School in the Sailor Arena. Pedro and Dolly have created and overseen the "Big Top Education," providing educational opportunities for primary school children and the "Laughter Unlimited," providing humor therapy for senior citizens in institutional settings. Pedro Reis has previously been inducted into the Circle of Fame at St. Armand's Circle and the Circus Hall of Fame at the Ringling Museum!



CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND DOLLY JACOBS PROFESSIONAL ACROBATICS

Dolly Jacobs was born into a circus family. Her Father was Lou Jacobs, a celebrated Ringling clown, and her Mother, Jean Rockwell, was an adventurist woman who ran away from home, became a model and cover girl, a photographer, and a published writer, and even had a pilot's license. Jean's circus career was curtailed when she fell from a revolving ladder at Madison Square Garden. After recovery from the accident Lou and Jean married and had two girls, Lou Ann and Dolly Jean. Dolly was born in Sarasota, the winter quarters of Ringling Bros. As a young girl she began learning acrobatic skills at the YMCA and at the Sailor Circus at Sarasota High School.



Dolly joined Ringling as one of the many showgirls so she could be near her father. She began developing her own act with the help of her godmother, Margie Geiger, who was married to Joe Geiger, one of the original Wallendas. Margie had performed a rare Roman Rings act which included swing as well as static skills. During the summer of 1976 Dolly and Margie created Dolly's act and she debuted in the 1976 edition of *The Greatest Show on Earth*.

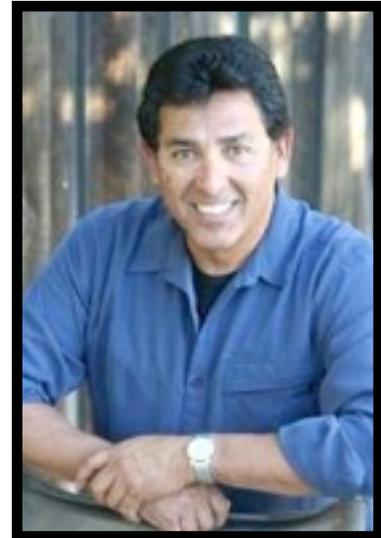
Dolly was an ambitious, hard working perfectionist with an artistic sense. Besides the Roman Rings, Dolly trained flying trapeze with Armando Farfan. She continued polishing her routine and Joe Geiger added the finale to her act that was a leap from the swinging Roman Rings to a vertical rope, a skill that had been performed by Frank Sheppard. Sheppard had died performing the skill when the force of his catch caused the rope to detach. Dolly added a layout flyaway to the catch and it became her trademark skill. She was assisted in perfecting the skill with the help of high wire aerialist Pedro Carillo and bear trainer Wally Naghtin.

Dolly auditioned her new modified performance to Irvin Feld in 1979 who rewarded Jacobs with a solo act in *The Greatest Show on Earth*. A star was born. Jacobs eventually left Ringling for the Big Apple Circus and then returned to the International Circus Festival in Monte Carlo for her second appearance; however, this time she earned the coveted Silver Clown. In 1977 during her first appearance, Dolly had earned the coveted *Dame du Cirque*.

Returning to Sarasota with Pedro, Dolly has continued to perform on the aerial straps while Pedro became CEO of Circus Sarasota and began producing circus shows. In 1997 Dolly was inducted into the Circus Ring of Fame at St. Armands Circle and in 1998 honored by the John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art.

CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND RICHIE GAONA PROFESSIONAL ACROBATICS

Richie Gaona is a fourth generation circus performer and first generation stunt man. He made his performance debut at the age of five with his family in a trampoline act performing at the Hollywood Palace in 1965 with host George Burns. Richie's summers during high school were spent performing with his family and helping his father train individuals at the Ringling Bros. Clown College. After high school, Richie worked with his Dad at Circus World on US 27. Gaona's trapeze flying improved and he caught his first triple September 7, 1977. After training three years with his father, Richie joined his brothers and sister (The Flying Gaona's) and performed in many of the best circuses throughout the world. Richie moved to Hollywood to become a stuntman in 1988. Bob Yerkes, a legendary stuntman, housed Richie for five months. Gaona worked as a trainer for the Circus of the Stars television show for six summers. It was great experience. Gaona only had 10-13 weeks to prepare actors for the live show. All safety devices were abandoned for the actual show performance. The experience wetted Richie's appetite for training people on trapeze.



Once Richie had his SAG card, he was booked for a commercial for Panasonic walking on a high wire while carrying a Panasonic video camera. Another big break was getting a stunt job on "Back to the Future Part 2." Other films followed: Desperado, Swordfish, and 3 Kings. There were also stunt jobs on television shows like NCIS, Southland, JAG, 90210, and many more.

Gaona had enjoyed training performers on Circus of the Stars so much that he set up a trapeze rig in his back yard and established Gaona's Trapeze Workshop along with training on trampoline, bungee trapeze, and high wire. Along with his son Alex, Richie has introduced trapeze to thousands, including the professionals of Circus Vargas. Gaona has been nominated two years in a row for SAG Awards in the category of Outstanding Performance by a Stunt Ensemble for the movies Ironman and Pirates of the Caribbean at World's End.

Some of the actors Gaona has trained include: Tom Cruise, Robin Williams, Jodie Foster, Jackie Chan, Leonardo DiCaprio, Gisele Bundchen, Joley Richardson, Venessa Branch, Neil Patrick Harris, Claire Danes, Jon Cryor, Izabella Miko, Bill Irwin, James Thierre, Mark Dacascos, Lou Diamond Phillips, Kate Walsh, Nicole Tom, Debbie Dunning, Marilou Henner, "The Girls Next Door," Lisa Joyner, John C. McGinley, Maria Maples, Brian Austin Green, Mario Lopez, Jamie Lunar, A. J. Langer, Ernie Reyes Jr., Alfonso Riberio, Mary Kate & Ashley Olsen, Giovanni Ribisi, Laura Diaz, Willie Ames, Julie Condra, Tracey Scoggins, Heather Lagenkamp, Ahmet Zappa, Sharif Atkins, and Russell Crow.

CLASS OF 2013 WAS LEGEND MARK CALDERON TRAMPOLINE & TUMBLING



Mark Calderon, who represented the USA at four World Championships from 1980-86, won the 1982 World Synchronized Trampoline Championship with his partner Stuart Ransom. Previously, in 1978, Mark placed second at the World Age-Group competition. During 1976—79, Calderon competed in the NAAU Junior Olympics. He won titles in national age-group competitions and national team qualifying competitions.

Calderon is a naval officer who was commissioned as an ensign in 1992, received his naval aviator “wings of gold” in 1995 and was promoted to the rank of commander in 1995. Previously stationed at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas, he served as the requirements officer on the staff of the Chief of Naval Air Training. Calderon was a training officer on the P-3 Orion and the T-44. Mark’s goal is to train and become a commercial air pilot.

Mark earned his bachelor’s degree in the field of kinesiology from the University of Texas-Austin.

Calderon was inducted into the USA Gymnastics Hall of Fame in 2013.

WAS WINTER NEWSLETTER

In the afternoon on September 18, the WAS membership visited the Cirque du Soleil "O" show rehearsal at the Bellagio Hotel hosted by Manu Durand, a WAS Legend and coach of the show.



On Thursday, September 19, the WAS membership was treated to the WAS program presentations. The first session, "Once Upon A Trampoline," was a presentation by Dick Albershardt. Dick explained how George Nissen made a trampoline for Dick's professional performances that could be broken down into eight pieces and transported in suitcases. Dick also elaborated on his professional performance career.



The second session was a Q & A session with the membership asking the 2013 Legends about various aspects of their careers.

A panel of experts that included Whitey Anson, Abie Grossfeld, George Hery, and others presented the third session on the United States gymnastics equipment industry. They discussed gymnastics equipment and various improvements that have lead to better gymnastic performances.



The final session was on the "History of the Diving Board" presented by Legends Tom Gompf and Don Leas. They traced the history of the development of the diving board and various material and design improvements that have lead to improved performances and more difficult dives.

WAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2013-2014

Bruce Davis (2012-15) President, Karl Schier (2012-15) 1st Vice President, Don Leas (2012-15) 2nd Vice President & Membership Chair, Hal Holmes (2013-16) Secretary, George Hery (2012-15) Treasurer, John Deininger, Past President, Dick Albershardt (2011-14), Whitey Anson (2013-16), Scott Barclay (2013-16), John Deary (2011-14), Abie Grossfeld (2011-14) Dick Gutting (2011-14) Pat Henderson (2013-16), Gallery of Legends Chair, Bruno Klaus (2011-14), Donna Kramer (2012-15), Larry Lindauer (2013-16), Dian Nissen Ramirez (2012-15), Pamela Pond (2011-14), Nancy Thurston-Hughhins (2013-16), Tito Gaona, Mexican Member, Eldon Godfrey, Canadian Member, Pedro Reis, South African Member.

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