

HISTORY OF THE WASHINGTON BRIDGE UNIT 1938-2004*

The history of the WASHINGTON BRIDGE UNIT is interlocked with that of the WASHINGTON BRIDGE LEAGUE, its predecessor, which had its beginning in 1934 when players from several social and duplicate bridge clubs in the city met to discuss the organization of a duplicate bridge league with classes/analyses, organized games and tournaments.

Participating in these meetings were representatives from the Aces, Potomacs, BJs, Mu So Lit, the Bridge Masters, and the Hill Top Clubs. It was agreed that the organization be named the WASHINGTON BRIDGE LEAGUE (WBL). Its elected officers were Dewey M. Carr, President; Lillian Wicker Barron, Secretary; William Evans House, Treasurer; Victor Daly, Tournament Committee Chair; and Duke Slaughter, Official Scorer.**

It is noteworthy that some of the members were participants in the Buckroe Beach Tournament that propelled the founding of the AMERICAN BRIDGE ASSOCIATION (ABA) in 1932. The liaison between ABA and WBL resulted in the League's hosting an ABA National Tournament in Washington, DC, August 1938, at the Lincoln Colonnade. After this tournament, many WBL members joined ABA and changed the organization's name to THE WASHINGTON BRIDGE UNIT (WBU). Caesar Barron was elected its first President.** Subsequently, the Unit has been host to six (6) ABA Summer National Tournaments: 1938, 1950, 1960, 1976, 1988, and 1996. ABA Spring Nationals were added to the schedule in 1969 but none have been held in Washington.

Originally, the Unit was part of the EASTERN SECTION of ABA and remained so, until 1980, when the MID-ATLANTIC SECTION was founded-- a move precipitated by the unwieldy size of the Eastern Section and other geographical factors. In January 1981, WBU became an integral part of the Mid-Atlantic Section along with the Clubs and Independent Units of Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. While the original mandate included Delaware, the decision for it to remain in the Eastern Section was made at a later date.

During the late 1930's through the 1960s, the WBU Presidents, in chronological order, were Caesar Barron, "Edward P. Lovett, Marie Madison, Kermit Ross, Roscoe Alexander, Joseph Henry, Thersa Archer, Carlisle Pratt, Calvin C. Rubens, Freddie O. Petite, Joseph Payne, Boyd Clark, Herman Jones, and Harrison L. McClenton. . . ."*** From 1970 to the

present time, the Unit Presidents were Georgia A. Vaiden (1969-70), James Jenkins (1971-72), Klotha Outten (1973-76), Herbert Quarles (1977-80), Faye Burke (1981-82), Edward Brantley (1983-84), Theodore Lloyd (1984-86), Dorcas Glascoe (1987-88), Shirley Wilson (1989-92), Juanita Watts (1993-94), Mattie Barrow (1995-98), Louis S. Garner (1999-2000), and Karen L. Pollock (2001---).

The WASHINGTON BRIDGE UNIT is composed of eleven (11) clubs, with a current membership of 214. They are: Banneker (founded in 1974), Bridgemasters (1933), Capitol (circa 1970), Columbians (1951), Dubrigettes (1952), DUOs (1950), Eastern (1954), Kings & Queens (1952), Overtricks (1979), V.I.P. (c. 1950), and the Y-Bridgettes (1977). At one time, the number of clubs totalled fifteen (15), however, four (4) have disbanded -- The Aces (organized in 1934), the Barronites, the Columbia Associates, and the Hilltops (1934). The dissolution date for the Aces is unknown, however, the Columbia Bridge Associates disbanded in 1994; the Barronites in 1995; and the Hilltops in 2002.

Notably, many WBU members have contributed to ABA's national leadership by serving as national officers. A long tradition of elected or appointed service includes, among others, the names of Victor Daly, Kermit Ross, Allan "Bub" Woolridge, Christina Jones, Thersa Archer, Lucille Gayle, Dewey Carr, Herman Jones, Harrison McClenton, Joseph Payne, Arthur Reid, and Clarice Reid.

Contributing with equal effectiveness and dedication are those who have served as Chairpersons of or Representatives to National Committees: Faye Burke, Iris Carr, LaVerne Edmondson, Jewel Parker Chapman, Reginald O. Chapman, Barbara Childs, Maxine Daly, Geraldine Flowers, Lucille Gayle, Constance Hobson, John Jordan III, Carrolena Key, Florence Lindsay, Jayne Lowe, Doris Mitchell, Doris Payne, Herbert Quarles, Clara B. Sargeant, Clarice Reid, Jerri Thomas, Shirley Wilson, and Christina Young, among others.

Similarly, bridge classes for WBU members have been conducted, formally and informally through the years. Some of the effective and dedicated teachers and mentors include: Mildred Anderson, Beulah Bradford, John Coleman, Louis Griffin, Charles Hanson, Lizzie Hepburn, John Jordan III, Jimmie Lee, Sallie Lipscomb, Carl Pink, Herbert Quarles, Clarice Reid, Mary E. Rowe, Franklyn Taylor, Marie West, and Elizabeth Woods, to mention only a few. Their efforts contributed, largely, to the formalization of bridge

education and the establishment of the BRIDGE COLLEGE in 2000, John O. Coleman Dean -- a highly organized and successful division of WBU.

Valiant efforts to acquire a permanent bridge home resound throughout the Unit's history, especially, during the administrations of Presidents Faye Burke, Juanita Watts and Shirley Wilson. However, it was not until 1998, through the diligent efforts of Dorcas and Lorenzo "Bus" Glascoe and during the tenure of President Mattie Barrow and under her leadership, ably supported by James Janifer (in charge of restoration and renovation), Co-Managers-- Dorcas Glascoe and Elizabeth Woods, and the Housing Committee Chairs, Edmund Peters and Andrew Ransom, that the dream was finally realized:

3801 Eastern Avenue, Mt. Rainier, MD became the Home of the Washington Bridge Unit.

WBU's influential history and the record of its successes are linked, inseparately, to the on-going support and efforts of every member. May we continue to work as a unified force, dedicated to the Unit's goals and principles and to the preservation of its rich heritage.

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* Compiled by the 2003 Ad Hoc Committee on History: Gwendolyn Harllee, Constance Hobson, Florence Lindsay, Frances Powell, Herbert Quarles, Andrew Ransom, Christina Young, and Karen Pollock (ex-officio).

**Excerpts from "The Formation of the Washington Bridge League", by Atty. Dewey M. Carr, WBL's first President and ABA National Vice President, WBU Bulletin, Fall Issue, 1970, v3, n1, pp. 5-6.

