

Eddie Kantar 1932–2022

Extract from NABC bulletin 17/07/2022

ACBL Hall of Famer Eddie Kantar died April 8 in Santa Monica CA, his longtime home. He was 89.

Kantar was a two- time world champion. He was a member of the winning North American squad in the Bermuda Bowl in 1977 in Manila, Philippines, and in 1979 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He also earned a silver medal in the Bermuda Bowl in 1975 and a bronze in 1969.

An ACBL Grand Life Master, Kantar won 17 NABC titles. All were team games except for the 1983 von Zedtwitz Life Master Pairs which he won with fellow Hall of Famer Bob Hamman.

In 2015, Kantar was named the ACBL Honorary Member of the Year. Despite this stunning resume, Kantar is best known as a teacher and author. The Bridge World published Kantar’s first piece known as a teacher and author. The Bridge World published Kantar’s first piece in 1954, while the Bridge Bulletin began showcasing his work a few years later. His columns “Kantar For the Defense” in The Bridge World, and the Bridge Bulletin’s “Test Your Play” and “Chalk Talk” have run for decades.

An author of some three dozen books, Kantar was a prolific writer who geared most his writing to newer or intermediate-level players. His style was a model of economy and clarity, laced with generous amounts of his trademark humor. Six of his books were named Book of the Year by the American Bridge Teachers Association.



WORLD TITLES

Gold medal

Bermuda Bowl 1977, 1979

Silver medal

Bermuda Bowl 1975

Bronze medal

Bermuda Bowl 1969

NABC titles Marcus Cup 1960, 1966 Spingold KO

Teams 1961,

1962, 1973, 1978

Reisinger BAM Teams 1962, 1965, 1976, 1980

Vanderbilt KO Teams 1964, 1978, 1988

GNT Championship Flight 1974, 1976

von Zedtwitz Life Master Pairs 1983

Jacoby Open Swiss Teams 1987

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Powerhouse squad, early '60s: (standing) Kantar, Bob Hamman; (seated) Lew Mathe, Howard Schenken, Marshall Miles.

Kantar also played the role of bidding theorist. His various works on the Roman key Card Blackwood convention are authoritative explorations of the treatment, especially in continuations that follow answers to asking-bids for the number of key cards or the queen-ask. Kantar's discussions of which variations of RKCB are most effective in different contexts was groundbreaking.

Thousands of players attended classes taught by Kantar across North America, though Southern California was his typical venue. Kantar was such a fan of the area that he declined to accept Ira Corn's invitation to join the famed Aces squad when the team was being assembled in the late 1960s because it would have required Kantar to move to



Billy Eisenberg and Kantar were frequent partners in the mid-'70s.

Dallas.

Born in Minneapolis MN in 1932, Kantar learned bridge as an 11-year-old, and then began teaching the game as an older teenager. Bridge was a full-time preoccupation for Kantar, as was his other hobby, table tennis. Kantar was the Minnesota state champion for table tennis, and he even got to play in the world championships for the sport, causing him to quip that he was the only person on the planet ever to have played in world championships for bridge and table tennis.

Tributes to Kantar were numerous, especially from members of the expert community.

Barry Rigal said, "Eddie was one of a kind.



KANTAR'S HUMOR

No synopsis of the life of Eddie Kantar would be complete without a sample of some of his hilarious sayings and stories.

If you have the slightest touch of masochism, you'll love this game.

I'm teaching a class, and I fill in at a table when one student has to leave. The lesson is on signaling, and I emphasize signaling encouragement with the higher or highest of equals. The lady I am playing with has the A-10-9-8-6 and correctly signals me with the 10. I compliment her. She says: "I just read in my Goren book that when you are playing with a weak player that you should make your signals as clear as possible."

Bridge is a great comfort in old age. It also helps you get there faster.

A married couple are not speaking to each other after a horrible game and are driving home from a distant bridge tournament. They pass by a field where there are many donkeys. The husband breaks the silence by asking the wife: "Relations of yours?" "Yes" she says. "In-laws."

Bridge is essentially a social game, but unfortunately it attracts a large number of antisocial people.

Years ago there were only two acceptable reasons for not leading partner's suit: (1) having no cards in the suit; (2) a death wish.

This one fellow loves to psych, but his partner has had his fill and tells him that from now, he is going to fine him 20 dollars every time he psychs. The "psycher" agrees and everything is going along just fine until the psycher winds up playing against a guy he hates. The psycher is the dealer. He says to his partner: "By the way, here's the 20 dollars I owe you: One spade!"

If I did everything right, I wouldn't be playing with you.

A club is led against a 7♦ contract, and declarer has four clubs to the jack. His partner, the dummy, says, "I have some good and some bad news for you. The good news is that I am void in clubs; the bad news is that I am also void in diamonds."



Kantar visited ACBL Headquarters as part of a teaching cruise on the Mississippi River in 2017.

People always talk about bridge players and say, 'No one had a bad word to say about them.' In Eddie's case, I am sure that is true."

Allan Graves wrote, "What an incomparable loss to all his worlds: Tremendous player, prolific and incomparable writer, and a good friend. This is really sad."

Pamela Granovetter said, "We've lost one of the most special people on the planet. Eddie was simply the best."

Kantar is survived by his wife of many years, Yvonne; stepsons Bryan (Megan) and Jeffrey; and granddaughters Elena, Evelyn and Rene. Kantar is also survived by his first wife, Phyllis Kantar.