

## Death of a Legend

Dorothy Truscott, perhaps the most successful woman player ever, died yesterday after a long battle with Parkinson's disease, at the age of 80. She had been married to Alan Truscott (perhaps the world's most famous journalist, as correspondent of the New York Times for over 40 years) till his death last year.

When she entered the Hall of Fame in the USA, the ACBL produced this biography of her, from which we quote.

As a five-year-old kibitzing the family bridge game, Dorothy Hayden Truscott never dreamed that bridge would lead her to world travel, four international championships and election to the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame.

For Truscott, bridge was a life-long love affair. "I can't remember when I didn't know the game," she says. "My parents played bridge and when I was little, there were always bridge games going." Truscott was permitted to kibitz "if I would stay very quiet."

She played her first bridge hand at about age seven. A guest was late, "so I was allowed to play for one hour. From then on, I was hooked. I couldn't wait for the next guest to be late." Truscott became one of the world's leading players and the only person who has competed in all four forms of major world championship competition.

She has won the Venice Cup three times and the World Olympiad Women's Teams (one of her teammates was Mary Jane Farrell, also a 1998 inductee into the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame).

Truscott placed second in the 1965 Bermuda Bowl - the only American woman other than Helen Sobel Smith till Rose Meltzer to represent ACBL in world open team competition - and third in the Open Pairs at the 1966 World Championships in Amsterdam, the highest finish ever by a woman in open competition.

She won more than 30 NABC titles - nine with Emma Jean Hawes, three with B. Jay Becker, three with her husband Alan, three with Gail Greenberg and the remainder with "nine or 10 various partners."

She won her first two NABC titles - the Mixed Pairs with John Crawford and the Women's Pairs with Betty Goldberg, both in 1959 - before she became a Life Master. In fact, "I had never played a session of bridge with either one of them."

Truscott described herself as a good partner. "I'm adaptable. I'm pleasant to play with and I'm lucky. Luck is a very big part. When you win any event, you have to be lucky. I must say I've been very lucky with partners."

She remembered a passed-out board from years ago. "We got 25 out of 25. When that happens, you know you're lucky."

Truscott was lucky, conceded former world champion and former teammate Betty Ann Kennedy, but she was also "a tenacious competitor and a very supportive teammate and

partner. She was a real student of the game. She was open to new ideas and she used them."

Among the new ideas attributed to Truscott are an unusual jump to show a singleton or void along with support for partner's suit (a splinter bid) and responses to Blackwood after interference (DOPI).

Truscott also received credit as the author of two bridge books which are considered classics: *Bid Better, Play Better* and *Winning Declarer Play*. She maintains now, however, that there are "too many bridge books around. I'm writing no more bridge books." Instead, in the last years of her life till forced to give up the game through ill-health she concentrated on the three NABCs plus teaching "a little bit of bridge" and working with husband Alan. "Bridge has been very good to me," she said. "Bridge is challenging, it keeps my mind stimulated and it also puts me in contact with people."

On a personal note, I was privileged to know Dorothy only in the last decade of her life, when slowed down somewhat by her health. But she was still as mentally alert, genial, and unfailingly kind as any one I have ever known. Our results in partnership and on the same teams were always rather better than the sum of our parts would have suggested. As indicated above, it was part of what she brought to the game to make her partners play well. Dorothy will be much missed.



### Answer to the Daily Trivia

DAVID BRUCE/BURNSTINE

### Answers to the Bridge Percentages

a) This combination is a straight guess. You can increase your chances fractionally over a straight 50% guess by tackling the suit by leading the 10 initially, intending to play the ace from dummy if nothing happens. Some of the time West will cover or betray possession of the queen.

b) You cannot guard against Q9xx in the West hand. So protect against the 4-1 splits by leading to the ace, then running the jack. This makes whenever the queen is with East, even in a four-card suit.

c) If you need four tricks lead low to the jack initially. this picks up singleton queen with West -whereas leading the king initially results in a loser

For three tricks cash the ace then lead towards your hand, putting in the nine if East follows small.