

Rosenkranz, George (b. 1916)

"Bridge is a hobby for me," says George Rosenkranz, causing one to wonder what heights he would have attained had he taken the game seriously.

Such an understatement seems unjustified from someone whose list of accomplishments in the game is staggering. An ACBL Grand Life Master with more than 13,000 masterpoints, Rosenkranz has 11 NABC titles: Vanderbilt Knockout Teams (1975 and 1976); Spingold Knockout Teams (1976 and 1984); Grand National Teams (1981); Men's B-A-M Teams (1984 and 1987); Reisinger B-A-M Teams (1985); Master Mixed Teams (1990); North American Swiss Teams (1990); Men's Swiss Teams (1991).

Born in Hungary in 1916, Rosenkranz earned his Ph.D. in organic chemistry in Zurich, Switzerland. His plans of accepting a teaching position in Ecuador in 1941 were changed by the outbreak of World War II, stranding him en route in Havana, Cuba. There he worked as a research chemist and later as a scientific director of a large pharmaceutical company until 1945.

After the war, Rosenkranz accepted a position in Mexico City, where he founded Syntex Corporation. He led the company's research team to important discoveries, namely the synthesis of cortisone and the development of birth control pills.

Rosenkranz remained in Mexico and became the leading Mexican player and theorist. He has represented his adopted country in dozens of world championship events since the early Sixties. He represented North America in the Bermuda Bowl in 1983, and reached the semifinals. Rosenkranz was Mexico's first Life Master and is a WBF World Master.

The story of Rosenkranz's career is not complete without mentioning his wife, Edith. Edith is originally from Vienna. She and George met in Havana in 1942 and were married in 1945, a short time before leaving for Mexico.

"My favorite partner is my wife," says George. "We have been married 54 years. She is the most wonderful thing that happened in my life."

The couple has three children and seven grandchildren. Edith Rosenkranz has been Mexico's top woman player for years and has represented Mexico in many world championship events.

Rosenkranz learned to play bridge from Culbertson's Blue Book. "I'd beat my parents for allowance money," he says mischievously.

Rosenkranz took a break from bridge during the early years in Mexico, but returned to the game at a regional in Fort Worth in the mid-Fifties. "There I found my mentor, John Gerber."

Rosenkranz developed the Romex system in response to the success of the Italian Blue Team in world-level events. "Our bidding methods were inferior to theirs, so I decided to develop a system that would put us on more equal footing. At first, the pros in the U.S. didn't want to invest the time to learn it, so I had to prove to myself that it was workable."

Rosenkranz's record speaks for the success of his methods. Along the way he managed to attract some of the best and brightest players to his cause. His best-known partnerships include those with Eddie Wold, Mike Passell, Roger Bates and Miguel Reygadas.

Rosenkranz was the non-playing captain of both Mexican teams in 1964 and of a team in the USBC in 1984. He placed 3rd in the Bermuda Bowl 1983. He's an ACBL Honorary Member 1990 and an ACBL Grand Life Master with more than 17,000 MPs as of 2/2008.

He established the Rosenkranz Award for the International Bridge Press Association in 1975, won the Precision Award 1976. Rosenkranz's writings include contributions to the ACBL Bridge Bulletin and other bridge periodicals. He has authored 10 bridge books including The Romex System of Bidding, Win with Romex, Bid Your Way to the Top, Trump Leads, Tips for Tops, More Tips for Tops, Bridge: The Bidders Game, also Modern Ideas in Bidding, Bidding on Target with Alan Truscott and Bid to Win, Play for Pleasure with Phillip Alder. He invented dynamic notrump, Mexican two diamonds and Rosenkranz doubles.