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THE SPANGLERS
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Magic Moments: The Bruce and Kitty Spangler Story

By Dan Rodriguez, PNP

“The whole thing was Alfred’s fault!” Alfred Carlton Gilbert was a magician and inventor who, back in 1909, provided supplies for magic shows. Bruce says that it was that darn picture on Gilbert’s *Mysto Magic Set* box that changed his life. The picture showed a rabbit in a hat, a ball and vase, colorful hanks, and a young performer magishing a pot of flowers. “As a five year old, I was enthralled! I wanted to be that boy. I wanted to do those tricks – especially the flower trick!” said Bruce. “Had it not been for that Gilbert *Mysto Magic Set*, I might not have been bitten by the magic bug. Without magic, I might not have been able to afford college, and I might not have met Kitty and spent the last fifty years with her. And without Kitty, there might not be a *Magic Moments* act, or a magic collection. Yep! It was all Alfred’s fault!”

Kitty and Bruce Spangler are third generation natives of Denver, Colorado, and have recently celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Throughout their marriage, magic has been an integral part of their lives, and today, their three children, Steve, Holly, and Wayne, are carrying on the tradition. While the Spanglers have traveled extensively performing their stage act, their hearts have always been close to home. Bruce and Kitty have always been consummate supporters and mentors to the Colorado magic community.

Magic Beginnings

Bruce discovered magic on his fifth birthday in 1946 when a neighbor gave him a Gilbert *Mysto Magic Exhibition Set* #1½. In those days, the magic set was most likely purchased for about a buck and a half from a national department store chain. Although his original magic set is no longer around, a few years ago Bruce



The Spanglers 1964



bought a replica of the same set on eBay for nearly \$300. Bruce says, “It was worth every penny! It was like being reunited with an old friend.”

One of Bruce’s defining moments was in the second grade when his teacher announced a talent show in which everyone was to participate. “I couldn’t sing, dance, or play an instru-

ment,” Bruce said. He added, “In desperation, I looked through my toy closet and came upon my Gilbert *Mysto Magic Set*. I practiced a few tricks and performed them in the talent show. From that point on during my school years, and into college, my classmates would refer to me as the magician.

“When I was around ten years old, my mentor was a local magician by the name of Wayne Minge. He was the resident magician (he ran the magic counter) at Pratt’s Book Store in Denver.” Bruce



*Kitty - a young ballerina,
Bruce - Thirteen years old*



remembers those classes well. He says that a dozen teen- and preteen-aged boys would enthusiastically attend each Saturday afternoon at Pratt's.

The classes were held in the ancient and dimly lit basement of the store. "To me, it was a scary place; I was quite reluctant to join the group at first, even though my parents reassured me that it was perfectly safe. After several weeks of consternation, I decided to embark upon the adventure. To my delight, I found the other young magicians to be quite supportive and willing to share their experiences with me."

In the years that followed, and with the help of some veteran adult stagehands, a stage was constructed in that spooky ol' bookstore basement. It had a professionally installed platform, curtains, and even lighting equipment. It was a safe place to meet, learn, and perform.

Each week, one of the members would do a show and the resident magician at the counter upstairs would come down to offer his critique of the show and teach something from the realm of the professional magicians. "I can't imagine a better environment to foster an interest in magic."

Each Saturday after magic class, Bruce and many other students would run across the street to Major's Camera Shop, which also had a magic department and was located only a half-block away from Pratt's. The magician working the magic counter at Major Magic was Earl Reum – another one of Bruce's mentors.

Eventually, Bruce landed his first job at Pratt's Book Store. It was his dream job! Now he had the responsibility of sweeping the floors, removing fingerprints and drool

from the glass on the magic showcases, demonstrating tricks, and teaching Saturday magic classes.

"Many famous magicians came through the shop, but I was not seasoned enough to recognize them. One day, while working the magic counter, a couple of rough-looking 'cowboys' came into the shop and began browsing the magic in the showcases. These two guys did not look like what I thought magicians should look like.

"The character with the cigar and fishing creel hanging at his side pointed to a Walsh cane and said to me, 'Would you get that out so that I can play with it a bit?' I politely told him that it was a magic prop that could only be handled by professional magicians. The other cowboy leaned over the counter and whispered into my ear, 'Don't you know who that is? That's Senator Clarke Crandall.' I remember thinking, 'Holy cow! I just insulted a real United States Senator!'

"Senator or not, I wasn't about to hand over the cane. He politely asked if I was allowed to tell him the price. I did. He bought it. Only after several days did word get around town, and somebody let me in on who the senator really was." (Author's note: Senator Clarke Crandall was a well-known magician of his era. However, "Senator" was just his nickname; he was never a U.S. Senator.)

Downtown Denver Theater Shows

The Orpheum Theatre was less than a five-minute walk from Pratt's Book Store; the manager of the theatre, Bill Hastings, was a true fan of magic. He wandered into Pratt's one day and introduced himself. Bruce remembers how truly impressed he was with Mr. Hastings's knowledge of

magic and magicians.

"I need a publicity stunt for our lobby to promote a horror film," said Mr. Hastings. "Would you fellows (referring to Bruce and several other young magicians in the store) bring that guillotine over to the theater and demonstrate it in our lobby? It would be worth fifty bucks to me." That was a lot of money back then, and Bruce was quick to take Mr. Hastings up on his offer.

"It was a smashing success for drawing a crowd in the lobby and attracting a newspaper photographer," Bruce recalled. "That's what it was all about."

There were about a dozen theaters in downtown Denver during that era, and soon after the Orpheum Theatre publicity stunt, the manager of the Paramount Theatre asked Bruce to think up something to do in front of his theater to publicize an upcoming voodoo-themed movie called *Macumba Love*.

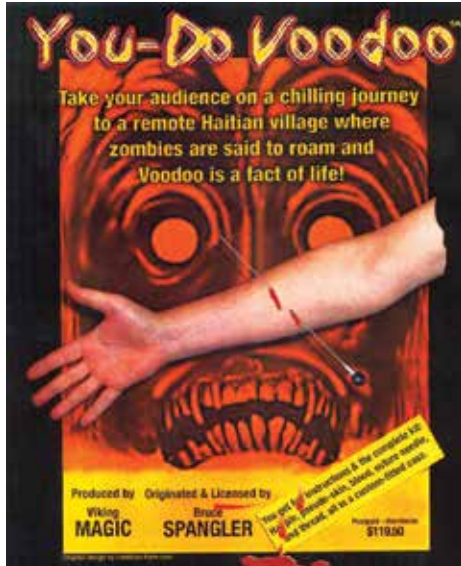
"In my mind's eye, I visualized the marquee adorned with skulls and skeletons, and a platform upon which a witch doctor was sticking voodoo needles



Opening of Macumba Love with guillotine in the lobby

into an unwilling spectator.”

That was the event that triggered the creation of Bruce’s now famous You-Do Voodoo (Needle Thru Arm) effect. The stunt drew big crowds. Bob Roe, the manager, loved it. Executives from United Artists Pictures loved it. The photographers loved it, and Bruce says he loved making money on that bloody thing for over half a century!



The childhood experience of attending magic class at Pratt’s Book Store inspired Bruce to carry on the tradition. In the early 1970s, Bruce and Kitty built a studio in the basement of their Denver home, similar to the bookstore’s basement, including a stage with lights and curtains.

But Bruce’s studio went well beyond that. In 1974 he added a control room, three TV cameras, and a suite of video/audio recorders and special effects equipment.

The students could now critique their own performances on videotape. They learned to do magic and to run the cameras and other electronic production gear.

More than a thousand students took lessons in Bruce’s studio during the twenty years it was in operation. Many of these students went on to become professional magicians.

The College Years

Magic served Bruce very well during his college years. While many of his friends earned money waiting tables, pumping gas, and mowing lawns, he found that he could surpass their financial results by performing magic.

At the beginning of his second semester of college, he recruited a fellow female student (who we will call “Jane”) as a magic assistant. Jane was to assist him in a Halloween Spook Show at a local theater; the feature effect was the Owen Brothers’ Shooting Illusion. Jane and Bruce had not previously performed this effect together, but since they had several weeks to rehearse, they decided to include it in the show.

The success of the shooting effect depended on perfectly synchronized timing between magician and assistant. Bruce wanted Jane to get used to the sound of the balloon popping and the pane of glass crashing to the floor behind her, so they rehearsed it no less than two dozen times – but without loading the “special bullet” into the pistol. Bruce simply shouted, “Bang!” and at the appropriate time, Jane tugged on the string, the balloon burst, and the glass shattered. It was perfect!

On the night of the performance, the Shooting Illusion was scheduled to close

the first half of the show. Jane stood in front of the glass with the balloon between her hands.

By now Jane was quite accustomed to the balloon’s pop and the sound of breaking glass, but she had no knowledge of how the loaded gun sounded when the trigger was pulled, and she had no expectation that a foot-long flame appeared at the gun’s muzzle. Upon hearing the gun’s report and seeing the flame, Jane thought that she had really been shot, and collapsed in a heap on the stage! The stagehand

thought that she had been shot, too, and closed the main curtain. However, the audience of college kids thought that it was the greatest thing they had ever seen!

After a few moments, an uninjured, but very embarrassed, Jane woke up. Bruce believes it was then that she decided that the job of magician’s assistant wasn’t for her. She informed Bruce that she quit, and as she walked off, she muttered something about his being the spawn of Satan.

How Bruce and Kitty Met

As Bruce’s professional magic career began gaining momentum, he remembers heading into the holiday season with a handful of party and club bookings. But with no assistant, and precious little time to train one, Bruce decided that he needed someone who already had considerable onstage experience. He decided that a dancer might possess many of the skills that were needed, so Bruce called a local dance studio, and made it known that the job was available.

Bruce says, “This is where I met and hired Kitty, fifty-one years ago.”

Soon after Bruce and Kitty married, their first big adventure was a trip to Abbott’s Get-together in Colon, Michigan, some 1,100 miles from their home in Denver. Recil Bordner, president of Abbott’s, had booked their act at his annual convention.

“With eight trunks full of equipment, the only way to get there was to drive in our 1957 Ford,” Bruce described “We got as far as Chicago when the rear main engine seal started to leak oil profusely, to the tune of about a quart every hundred miles, and in the middle of the night. But, we made it, and the act was well received.

"When children ask, 'How did you do that?' their mind is open and they're ready to learn. A magic trick will provoke the question, and science can provide the answer. Magic is the ultimate teacher!"



"The next day we were eating dinner at Colon's Magic Carpet restaurant when Recil and a gentleman, unknown to us at the time, sat down with us at our table. The gentleman complimented us on our act and said he would like to book our act on *The Hollywood Palace* or the *Ed Sullivan Show*." His parting words were, "Drop me a line and we'll see if we can work it out." With that, the gentleman gave Bruce his business card and left.

The gentleman was Mark Leddy, a well-known booking agent for those shows. They exchanged several letters over the next few months. Mr. Leddy's last letter said that he was sorry, but the network had cancelled both of the shows and, as Bruce concludes, "That's as close as we ever got to the big time."

Early Denver Television

In the early days of television in Denver, there were many opportunities for a young magician to perform. A local car dealer sponsored a live TV talent show in about 1954 called *Doorway to Fame*. Viewers would vote for the talent by writing to the station. Bruce tried out for the show, got on, and eventually won! The grand prize was a wristwatch.

Under the bright studio lights back then, shiny things like linking rings and table legs "burned" into the black-and-white camera's tube and had to be sprayed with a soapy substance that dulled them down.

In 1955, a show called *George Byron's Shock Theatre* aired. The late-night Friday program featured horror films with some type of stunt during the breaks. George would often have a young magician

perform a quick, but spooky, trick or illusion following each commercial. The pay was zero, but the publicity was wonderful!

A tall, red-haired fellow by the name of Rex Morgan did a late-night talk show from Denver's Channel 2 in 1958-59. "Rex was a delightful show host and welcomed unusual guests. He had heard about the Shooting through a Lady illusion that I had performed at the Boulder Theatre (the performance with the fainting assistant). I thought the trick was a disaster, but to Rex, it sounded like something that would be great for his show, exactly as it was performed in Boulder."

The new assistant did a believable job of faking passing out and the phone lines lit up with calls from viewers who either loved it or hated it. Apparently, that was what Rex was anticipating. He loved it and had Bruce back to do the Needle through Arm and fire eating.

In later years, Bruce did weekly performances on *Blinky's Fun Club* and *Gene's Junction*. Blinky was a clown who hosted an afternoon TV show with kids as guests. Bruce did a magic segment on the Friday show for over two years. *Gene's Junction*, hosted by Gene Dolph, was an afternoon program on Denver's educational channel. For several years, Bruce and Kitty were regular performers on his show.

The Collector

Bruce has always been an avid collector of magic; he will tell you that his mentor, Wayne Minge, urged him early on to never sell or trade his magic props. As for the few times he did part with something, he felt like he was selling one of his kids. So,

as Bruce says, "From that point on I kept most of the magic I acquired over the years."

When Bruce and Kitty got married fifty years ago, they started displaying their magic props on shelves in their home. But soon, they began adding to their display by purchasing other collections. Their first acquisition was the John Holoubek collection. John was a well-known magician and was the person who did the cover artwork on the 1949 S.A.M. convention program. That was the year the S.A.M. held its national convention in Denver.

When John felt he could no longer perform, he contacted Bruce and said that he had several pieces of magic that he wanted to sell; he asked if Bruce wanted to buy them. By that time, as Bruce recalls, John had about thirty feet of shelving full of his magic props.

"When I saw John's collection I realized that I couldn't break it up. Everything needed to stay together, so I offered to buy the entire collection. Kitty and I had just gotten married and we didn't have the money to buy everything, so we made a deal to keep the collection together. I agreed to pay for and take half of the collection and, when Kitty and I had the money for the remainder of the collection, he would sell it to us, which he eventually did."

Back in the 1970s, as the Spangler's collection grew, the magic props were displayed on shelves in the basement of their Denver home. This is also where Bruce taught magic lessons in the evenings and on weekends.

Over time, several opportunities arose to purchase the props of other magicians who were retiring, had lost interest in magic, or had passed away. As the Spangler



Earl Reum Collection

collection grew, Bruce and Kitty purchased more shelf units upon which to display the newly acquired props. Repeating that process, over and over, as batches of magic became available, resulted in a collection of magic grouped by the person who previously owned it.

Bruce says, "We discovered that it was interesting to see the sub-collections of their former owners, especially if they enjoyed some level of fame." Many of these sub-collections had their own duplicates, since each magician had his or her favorite type of props such as wands, Linking Rings, Cups and Balls, gaffed coins, and trick cards.

very valuable papers and treasures from the trash, proving that one man's trash is another's treasures."

Currently, Bruce and Kitty are progressing along with updating a complete inventory and comprehensive cataloging of the collection. They estimate that the final count of items in the collection to be in the range of 8,000 to 10,000.

Among the thousands of items displayed in this mini-museum, Bruce proudly declares that there are more than 1,500 decks of cards, 800 gimmick coins, ninety-two sets of handcuffs and magic locks, thirty-eight Die Boxes, thirty-two sets of Linking Rings, fifty sets of Cups

Often when a collection becomes available, Bruce is called upon to assist in its appraisal and disposition. And as Bruce explains, "Appraisal values are often determined by finding comparable items that have sold on Internet auction sites. When all parties agree on the value of the props, we'll often make a cash offer. That's how most of the items have found their way into our mini-museum."

Upon the successful negotiation for a collection, Bruce will ask that it include *everything*. "We even ask for all papers, photos, trash, and even floor sweepings. We've rescued some

and Balls, twenty Dove/Chick Pans, twenty Change Bags, fifteen Choppers/Guillotines, 900 silk hanks, 350 packet tricks, and 800 books.

Although most of the collections are displayed together by their original owner, for reasons of security or special storage/display requirements, some categories of props are separated from their original owner's groupings. Due to their small size and relatively high value, coins are displayed in an isolated environment. Silk hanks, too, required special handling and controlled storage.

As of this writing, the Spanglers have accumulated thirty-two collections from professional magicians. Some of these magicians were national or international performers, but most were based out of Colorado or neighboring states.

Wisdom Begins in Wonder

Bruce has always considered himself a part-time professional magician. His major in college was chemistry, but he spent most of his working experience with computers and electronics. Both of those disciplines are useful in the design of magic effects, and they provided him with a vocation in the corporate world.



When Bruce resigned from corporate life in 1995, he wanted to fill his time with something meaningful and to do something that would make a difference with children. Since Bruce's career had always focused on science, he wanted to encourage kids to pursue a career in science; Bruce and Kitty formed FutureQuest, Inc. and developed a series of science/magic assembly programs designed to stimulate interests in science. They retired from performing professionally in 2012.

Bruce explains, "Socrates knew a simple secret: wisdom begins in wonder. When children ask, 'How did you do that?' their mind is open and they're ready to learn. A magic trick will provoke the question, and science can provide the answer. Magic is the ultimate teacher!"

How to Stay Married for Fifty Years

"For Kitty and I, our lives pretty much focused on the three M's: Marriage, Magic, and Music. Our marriage was of primary importance as evidenced by our celebrating fifty years without killing one another."

Bruce and Kitty both came from fairly strong backgrounds in music. Kitty plays piano, accordion, marimba, drums, and (at the time they met) taught ballet at a dance studio. Bruce had taken several years of formal piano lessons and played the organ. The Spanglers have always had a piano and an organ in the house, each of which gets a daily workout.

Bruce concluded our interview by saying, "In the background, through all of those years, we performed magic part time, while persistently building our magic collection. Our marriage is based upon our love of magic and the magic of love."

For Bruce and Kitty Spangler, magic is not just a hobby; it is a way of life! ♦



A Little More From Bruce Spangler

Thayer's Mummy Case

"Perhaps the most prized item in our collection is the Thayer Mummy Case. According to a letter from magic historian Dr. Robert Albo, 'It was undoubtedly made by Carl Owens in the Thayer workshop in 1934.' It was originally owned by Roscoe Gaylord (aka The Great Leighton of Grand Island, Nebraska).



"Roscoe performed the Mummy Case only a few times, as evidenced by its almost perfect condition. In 1938, he wrapped it in newspapers and returned it to its original Thayer shipping crate, where it remained well preserved until October of 1979 when we found it buried

behind a pile of lumber in an old barn in Casper, Wyoming. Velma Gaylord (Roscoe's widow) had planned to use it for firewood since nobody seemed to be interested in it.

"Velma called her husband's long-time friend, Orville Meyer, asking for assistance in finding a new home for the Mummy Case as well as a small roomful of Roscoe's equipment. Orville called me and asked, 'How would you like to go with me to Casper to appraise a collection?' I was thrilled that Orville had asked me to accompany him. And, of course, I agreed. Fortunately, the value that Velma and Orville set for the collection was within my reach, so I purchased the entire collection, including the Thayer Mummy Case.

"In a letter to me dated October 21, 2010, Dr. Albo stated that 'outside of the picture in Thayer's catalog that introduces his illusions, yours (Mummy Case) is the only one I've ever seen. The trick was first made for the motion picture industry in a movie that featured magic. Yours may be that original.'

"We are, indeed, very fortunate to have Dr. Albo's expert opinion on this illusion. Unfortunately, he passed away on February 21, 2011, shortly after penning his letter to me."

Some Memories Really Suck

"It was a snowy December night, and my agent called in a panic saying that an act had cancelled on her and she needed an emergency fill-in. I eagerly agreed to perform. She agreed to pick me up in two hours and drive me to the show since I wasn't old enough to drive yet.

"We loaded the five trunks of magic equipment into the back of her car and headed for the venue. It was dark and snowing heavily, and I had no idea where we were heading. As we pulled up to a stage door in the back of a large building, the agent informed me that the crowd was finishing dinner and the show would start in about thirty minutes. That was barely enough time to set up, but I made it.

"'You're on!' shouted the emcee. I cued the tape and

pulled the big lever that flooded the stage with light. The curtains parted and the music sounded fantastic! The well-rehearsed act went flawlessly, as usual. I was pretty much blinded by the follow-spot, and couldn't see a thing past the footlights.

"The seasonal big closing was a two-handed multiplying candle routine followed by the production of a four-foot-tall Christmas tree. As the music ended, the pre-recorded announcer thanked the audience and wished them all a very Merry Christmas. Instead of the usual applause, silence came crashing in. After the curtain closed, the agent approached me and said that the eight candles were a wonderful touch for their Chanukah celebration...but the Christmas tree, not so much.

"She apologized for not providing that one relevant piece of information, namely, that the venue was a synagogue."

Earl Reum's Treasures

"One of the largest collections that we recently appraised was that of my life-long friend, Dr. Earl Reum. Over the years, he had filled his basement with his magic treasures – thousands of them! After his passing, his wife Mary asked us to help her evaluate the collection and dispose of it appropriately. We spent all of our spare time for over a month accomplishing the inventory and appraisal. Ultimately, we were able to purchase a goodly number of pieces, but the vast majority were auctioned to the local magicians or sent to be sold by Paul Diamond.

"I was first introduced to Earl when I was about seven years old. At that time, he worked the magic counter at Major's Camera Shop. My father was a high school teacher and Earl was one of his students. Earl later became a teacher, and my wife was his student in middle school. It's a small world (but I wouldn't want to paint it).

"The items that we selected to purchase from Earl's collection were carefully chosen, not so much for their value, but because we knew that Earl treasured them. The Earl Reum collection occupies a very prominent place in our mini-museum and we feel honored to have had the opportunity to acquire it."

The Bank Job

"One evening in 1974, the Mile High Magician's Society held their monthly meeting at the Southwest State Bank in Denver. The bank was gracious enough to let us use the community room for the after-hours meetings, provided that we locked the outside door when we left. In order to accomplish that, someone had to pick up the key from the bank during the day, lock the door as we left, and drop the key into the night deposit box.

"On several occasions, we had forgotten to pick up the key and had to have the guard come by to lock up at around 11 p.m. The bank people weren't happy about that and let us know that we would lose our privileges if should it happen again.

"So, as the last small group of us left this particular evening, we discovered that, once again, nobody had the

key. Then, someone in the group said, 'Bruce knows how to pick locks, let him lock the bank.'

"The bank happened to be located very near a district police station, so patrol cars drove past the bank frequently. Armed with a bobby pin and small screwdriver, I set out to lock the bank's front door while the brethren tried to shield my actions from any passersby.

"I had visions of having to tell my cellmates that I got arrested for breaking out of a bank. My hands were shaking from either the cold weather or from sheer fear, but after what seemed like hours, but were actually minutes, I got the job done and locked the door.

"Our club may be the only gang of magicians in history who picked the lock on the front door of a bank while escaping after having committed no crime. The good news is that the club got to keep their meeting place, nobody got arrested, and magic prevailed!"

Growing Up in Spanglerland By Steve Spangler



There was never a dull moment in Spanglerland. One minute I was helping Dad set up for a full day of magic classes, and the next minute I'd be on my tippy-toes, precariously perched on a chair operating an enormous camera that was broadcasting the lessons on the closed circuit television network that was also part of the house!

Whether the task at hand was building product for the mail-order business, helping mom mix up a new batch of stage blood, or rehearsing for the weekly television show, we did it as a family. Magic conventions, classes, competitions, and club meetings were all pieces of the puzzle that made growing up Spangler so much fun.

While there are hundreds of stories, here are a few of my favorite memories.

- As a kindergartner I took my dad to show-and-tell to settle the argument once and for all that my dad really did eat fire.
- For "Bring Your Kids to Work Day," my mom taught me the process behind making the absolute best fake blood in the business. After sharing the highlights of my day with the class, the school social worker followed me home. Dad performed his Needle through the Arm trick for the nice lady and she went away.
- Dad taught a class on escapes to members of the Denver Police Department. As part of the opening demonstration, my dad would ask a police officer to lock me up in their handcuffs. In less than sixty seconds, I would use a bobby pin to pick the deadlock and shim my way free. Let's just say that dad had their undivided attention for the rest of the class.
- When the Action Magic Academy was in high gear during the 1970s, my parents offered thirty-six different magic classes per month. As dad's helper, that means I sat in on over a thousand magic classes before graduating from elementary school.
- My parents taught me the value of learning how to do magic by reading books and practicing new routines to perform at our monthly S.A.M. meeting.
- The centerpiece in our living room was a beautiful theater organ. I remember dad rehearsing for months and months in preparation to accompany all of the main stage acts at the magic conventions we attended over the summer.
- I can't remember a time growing up when Mom and Dad didn't have some sort of television gig. My experience working in television today was greatly shaped by watching my dad perform on live television week in and week out.
- When my high school sweetheart was invited over for dinner, my parents measured her to see if she would fit in the Zig-Zag illusion. She did...so I married her.

Bruce Spangler – A Mentor to Many

By Dan Rodriguez



Thirty-five years ago, as a teenage boy, many of my fondest memories were the times I spent attending magic classes at Bruce and Kitty Spangler's home located on South Grant Street in Denver, Colorado.

Magic classes were held on many weeknights and always on Saturday in their basement. I vividly remember the performance area, curtains, lighting, sound system, video cameras, and the giant videotape machines in the

control room. The Spangler basement was the coolest place to be for any teenage boy and was truly inspiring to me!

I remember he stored magic in dozens of cardboard file boxes labeled coin class, card class, science magic, rope magic, spooky magic, liquid magic, comedy magic, etc. I remember the life lessons and funny stories Bruce interjected during the magic classes he taught.

Bruce Spangler was my first magic mentor and I remember him telling stories about famous magicians, magic shows, and magic clubs. I especially remember Bruce sharing his vision of restarting a young magician's club in Denver. That vision of his stuck with me, and is what inspired me to be a cofounder of the Society of Young Magicians in 1984. My involvement with the SYM led to me becoming S.A.M. National President in 1993, which led me to become the Executive Director of the S.A.M. Magic Center Foundation, and now, a thirty-five-year veteran professional magician. And it's all Bruce's fault.

Because of Bruce's influence, to this day, I still store the magic props I've collected over the years in cardboard file boxes labeled coins, cards, ropes, etc. I still perform many of the same routines Bruce taught me over thirty-five years ago.

Many teenagers from the '70s and '80s have gone on to successful careers, because, they too were inspired by Bruce Spangler. So, on behalf of the former students of the Action Magic Academy: thank you Bruce!

Did You Know?

- Bruce was the show organist/accompanist for several magic conventions including the Midwest Magic Jubilee and the Tulsa Cavalcade of Magic.
- Kitty is an accomplished ballerina, and taught dancing for many years. Her specialties are ballet, tap, gymnastics, and jazz.
- The Spanglers operated the Action Magic Academy, a school for magicians, for over twenty years. Many current and past members of the Mile High Magicians's Society, S.A.M. Assembly 37, and I.B.M. Ring 131 were at one time associated with the school, either as lecturers or students.
- Bruce invented the Needle through Arm trick (a.k.a. You-Do Voodoo) as well as a dozen chemical-based magical effects. One of their most successful products was Micro-Krystal Theatrical Blood, which was used by many professionals, including Tony Andruzzi, Eugene Burger, and Penn & Teller.
- The stage act performed by the Spanglers for many years was named Magic Moments; it was the only act of its kind in that era (late 1950s) to feature fully automated lighting and sound equipment. The act was performed to music prerecorded on a four-track tape. Two tracks were used for stereo sound, the third channel was for cues that controlled the lights, and the fourth channel was used for verbal stage direction cues plugged into the stage intercom.
- In 1974, the Spanglers operated one of the only privately owned video studios in the Denver area. The studio featured both half-inch and one-inch video recorders, six tripod-mounted cameras, two special effects generators, audio mixing/editing equipment, and a lit stage. It was unique for its time.
- Bruce and Kitty operated a successful mail order business for their exclusive effects from 1974 to 1985, and also had booths at many magic conventions.
- Bruce and Kitty have three children. Steve is the oldest and has become an internationally known inventor, manufacturer, science speaker, and accomplished magician. He is the proud father of three sons, all of whom have a strong interest in magic. Holly, an occupational therapist, has two magically-inclined daughters. Wayne is an analytics manager for a major communications company; he continuously amazes his two sons with magical effects. All three of the Spangler children have been invited performers at major magic conventions.