

Stephen (Steve) Jack Lawrence, previously from Athens, Texas and El Paso, Texas, died May 12, 2017 in Denver, Colorado. He was 92 years old and had been failing from the effects of Alzheimer's disease for several years.

In Memory of
Stephen Jack Lawrence
July 20, 1924 - May 12, 2017



Steve began life in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as Harry Goldpaint. His mom died when he was very young and his father sent his sister, Sara, to live with her aunts and grandparents. He put Steve and his three brothers in a foster home. Steve left that difficult environment at 16 to join the Marines and served in World War II as a tech sergeant and navigator. Stephen always loved card games, but became fascinated with bridge while watching comrades play during his return by ship to the United States after the war was over. He changed his name to Stephen Jack Lawrence when he became of age.

Steve graduated from the College of Mines and Metallurgy (later known as the University of Texas at El Paso) where he earned degrees in geology, mathematics, and physics. He honed his bridge skills when he started college in 1947 by playing quite a bit of

the time in the Student Union building. He earned over 17,129 Master Points throughout his lifetime from the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) at a time when points were handed out sparingly. He was a member of the ACBL for most of his adult life and earned the titles of Life Master as well as Diamond Life Master. He met his wife-to-be, Frances Ann Bianchi Cuen, his last semester in college and they married in April 1950. They spent the next few years in West Texas and Oklahoma where he worked as a petroleum geologist.

Steve continued his geology work for a number of oil companies including Phillips Petroleum, Standard Oil, and Petrobras. The family traveled extensively in Latin America including stays in Bogota, Colombia and Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. Steve would travel to the oil fields during the week while the family stayed in Salvador. Steve played bridge in his off hours, whether in South

America or in the United States, and he often helped others earn Master Points by partnering with them.

Steve and Frances returned to the United States around 1960 and came back to El Paso, Texas where they raised four children: Annette, Russell, Angie, and Sally Jo. Steve continued playing bridge and often he and Frances hosted bridge parties at their home where they enjoyed entertaining. He used his sharp mind to rise to the top of his field as a government employee at White Sands Missile Range while also serving as president of District 16 of the ACBL (most of Texas and Mexico) in the 1970s. He retired from the Civil Service in 1984 and enjoyed many years of traveling around the country playing in bridge tournaments and teaching other players.

After Frances died in 1993, Steve lived in Athens, Texas for over 20 years with Sara Granger, another bridge player. He became close to Sara after they had both lost their spouses and Sara asked him to partner with her to help improve her bridge game. He and Sara were active at the bridge club in Athens and he often traveled to Tyler, Texas to play bridge and to direct the bridge games there. He received years of good loving care from Sally Jo and Angie as he declined after Sara died.

Steve never missed a birthday or an anniversary-he always wrote and called each of his many nieces and nephews-and he never forgot a bridge hand. He was funny, cheerful, kind, incredibly charming, and dashing, and like many of his generation who had known hardship and death, he knew how to laugh and how to enjoy life. His indomitable spirit will be missed.

Steve is survived by his children: Annette Quinn of Atlanta, Georgia; Russell Lawrence of Boynton Beach, Florida; Angie Lawrence of Aurora, Colorado; and Sally Jo Crowson of Austin, Texas; plus eight grandchildren; ten great grandchildren; and Sara Granger's daughter, Gayla Granger Kirk, of Athens, Texas. Also surviving are his sister, Sara Rovinsky, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and her children Robert (Renana Brooks) Rovinsky of Washington, DC; Paul (Paula) Rovinsky of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Sue (Gary) Levy of San Francisco, California; his brother-in-law, Jack Rudolph, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Delray Beach, Florida; and Jack's daughter, Arlene (Dan Hoffman) Rudolph, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-in addition, Steve's cousin, Joan Rhodes, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; niece, Beverly (Barry) Nathan, of Manalapan, New Jersey; and niece, Linda (Marvin) Goldfield, of Lake Worth, Florida.

A memorial service and interment in the columbarium is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. on June 19, 2017 at Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver, Colorado.

Please meet us at the waiting area for Staging Area "A", where we will then proceed to the shelter for services.

Arrangements under the direction of Advantage Aurora Chase Chapel, Aurora, CO. Service Information: Memorial Service Monday, June 19, 2017 3:00 pm - 3:30 pm; Fort Logan National Cemetery, 4400 West Kenyon Avenue, Denver, CO 80236

Steve Lawrence's obituary is posted here (above) for good reason. He became El Paso's first Grand Life Master by virtue of winning a national event with Garner McDaniel. He was also a bridge professional, helping many to become Life Masters by playing with them, teaching them how to count, signal, experiment with new conventions, but not overwhelming them with little more than basic bridge strategies. His record of winning the Audrey Norton trophy for the most points won at Carlsbad stood for many years only to be eclipsed by one of his students and dear friends. He was a part of the El Paso team who beat Ira Corn's "Dallas Aces" at one of our regionals at the airport Hilton. Steve loved playing "money bridge," too, and gladly took the money of many at the bridge table who watched and admired his skill at handling cards. After his wife Frances died, he handed over his Life Master plaque, leaving El Paso behind and entering another phase of his life in Athens Texas with his new life partner Sara Granger. And yes, even Steve, playing in one of Tyler's regional, shocked his partner by forgetting Roman Key Card Blackwood responses, proving once more how even the mighty should be humbled by this game. It was Alzheimer's that finally crippled Steve at 92, rendering his fine mind useless, and silencing him, unable to speak for most of his last year. (In remembrance of my mentor by Bob Esch) [Obit link In Memory of Steve Lawrence](#)