

**Wolff**, a 10-time world champion, is a member of the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame, a former president of the ACBL and the World Bridge Federation and is the author of the Active Ethics program among his many contributions to bridge administration. He is also the author of the syndicated bridge column, *The Aces on Bridge*.

Recalling their days in the bridge club business, **Musumeci** said his friend “should be remembered for the “Wolff movement,” which came about as a marketing tool for the people who played in their junior games. “After Bobby got through with the recap sheet,” Musumeci said, “no pair was below average.” Wolff left San Antonio in 1968 to help Ira Corn with the formation of the Aces, the world’s first fulltime professional bridge team. Musumeci followed not long after that to coach the team. In a study Musumeci did on the effectiveness of individual team members, Wolff came out on top, first in partnership with Jim Jacoby and later with Bob Hamman.

**Morse**, who kicked off the tributes to Wolff, related that his partnership with Wolff goes back to the Sixties. In fact, he and Wolff were members of the Charles Goren team the last time Goren played at an NABC -- in Montreal in 1967.

“Bobby Wolff is a very dynamic individual,” Morse said. “If you want something done in the bridge world, go to Bobby Wolff.” When Wolff arrived at the reception, he was surprised to see his older brother, Walter, there. Still practicing as an attorney, Walter nearly stole the show with reminiscences about “my baby brother.” Walter recalled that he and Bobby learned bridge as they watched their parents play on a train trip from San Antonio to Chicago in the mid-Forties. Of course, Walter said, “Bobby didn’t start winning until we got to Austin.” Then there was the Wolff system, as described by Walter: “It was simple but effective: I could bid clubs. On weekends and holidays, for two hands, I could bid diamonds.”

Walter recalled that Bobby attended law school, but was drafted into the U.S. Army when he was just about to earn his degree. By the time Bobby returned from service, he had lost credit for all his college work and had to start over. The second time around, as Bobby was nearing completion of his course work for the law degree, Corn called and asked for help in forming the Aces. Bobby never earned the law degree. “It’s just as well,” Walter said, “because Bobby is too nice to be a lawyer.”

Joan Gerard, who represents District 3 on the ACBL Board of Directors, paid tribute to Wolff as her mentor. “The ACBL is built on the hard work and dedication of volunteers,” Gerard said. “To me, Bobby Wolff is the leader of them all.”

She said Wolff has given his time to help train young players, including serving as coach of one of the U.S. teams which will play for the World Junior Team Championship in Fort Lauderdale FL next month. Said Gerard: “I’m accused of being a Bobby Wolff fan. I plead guilty.”

**Hamman**, Wolff’s partner for 27 years, said he first encountered Wolff in 1963, when their two teams played in a major knockout match. Wolff and Ozzie Jacoby were thrashed by Hamman’s teammates, but it was discovered that both pairs sat the same direction. In the replay, Wolff’s team won. When Wolff was more into bridge administration, Hamman said, many players were happy. When he was more into playing, the administrators were happy. Oneway or another, Hamman said, “he has brought a great deal of happiness to a lot of people.”

Aileen Osofsky, Goodwill Committee chairman and emcee of the show, read a message sent by José Damiani, president of the World Bridge Federation:

“Bobby Wolff has, through his bridge career, been a strong advocate for the promotion of bridge as a highly ethical and courteous game, and for players showing as high a respect for their partners as for their opponents. “He is one of the best examples that we could have of a great champion and a great administrator, first within the ACBL and then as president of the World Bridge Federation. His unfailing integrity and courtesy are an example to us all.”

The most emotional tribute came from **Wolff’s daughter Wendy**, who flew in from Dallas Monday just

for the event. At one time in her life, Wendy resented bridge. "Every time I turned around my father was off to another bridge tournament," she said. "I could not understand what was so important about sitting around playing cards." Everything in their household, Wendy said, revolved around bridge.

Then she discovered a positive side to the game, namely the people she met at NABCs, where she met other "bridge orphans" and made lifelong friends. "But I still didn't get what it was all about," she said.

Then came Venice, Italy, in 1988. Wendy's father was on the U.S. team which qualified for the World Olympiad Teams. "I went not because it was the Olympiad.

I went because it was Venice." Wendy was told her father's team had no chance to win or even get to the semifinals. "Not only did they get to the semifinals," she said,

"they took home the gold. All of a sudden Italy was not so important, and watching my dad and his team on vugraph was. I caught the bug. I was never more proud to be Bobby Wolff's daughter. I understand now how important his accomplishments and contributions

to the game are. "I love you, dad. Thanks to everyone." When he took the podium, Wolff was treated to a standing ovation from a gathering described as one of the largest ever at a Goodwill Committee reception. Noting that Osofsky had started the meeting with a list of ACBL dignitaries who died in the past year, Wolff said, "I don't want to be on that list."

Wolff related a story involving the legendary tournament director Al Sobel, who was inducted into the Bridge Hall of Fame last week.

At a regional in Fort Worth, Wolff was playing with Sidney Lazard in a knockout teams. Wolff picked up his hand and counted 14 cards. Lazard had 12 cards. Sobel was the TD who arrived, and he took the board to the other table. A few minutes later, Sobel returned to say that the board had been played with 14 and 12 cards at the other table. "Play it," said Sobel. "The rest of the story," Wolff joked, "is that Sidney and I bid eight clubs and made it."

Wolff concluded by thanking Osofsky and the others who planned the surprise. "One of the best things anyone can have is friends," Wolff said. "This means a lot more to me probably than anything that has happened to me in bridge."