

Thanks so much for this opportunity to share my bridge story. It is an interesting story to tell along with some humor involving my bridge teachers and family nights playing bridge. I started my bridge playing a long time ago when I was a teenager. I was helping Walter Lewis play his cards, only by holding them in the correct order, at the regional bridge tournaments on the MS gulf coast. My father (Richard Bryant) and my grandfather (Elwood Bryant) are/were very avid bridge players. So while making some extra money, I got to hang out with some of my favorite people. I did not really get into bridge playing until Covid shut everything down in 2020. This gave me a bunch of time on my hands and what better time to learn how to play bridge. My father began with simple instructions on point counting and how to go about bidding the hand. This lasted about a month...every day we were discussing hands to bid for hours. Needless to say...I can bid very well...playing of the hand...that took another, more patient, instructor. Dan Spangler and I started playing together online using BBO. Dan kept late hours like I did. About every night of the week, we were playing 20-30 hands against the dreadful robots. After a couple of months, Dan and my father decided it was time for me to play at the Unit 180 clubhouse. From the time I first walked in and up until now, everyone has been really nice and eager to play with me. Dan and I decided to play together every other Thursday, work permitting of course, and on one of our first times playing...we earned master points and top MP scores. I would like to share one of these hands with you. We were playing against Mike Moses (President and Life Master) and Paul Watkins (Life Master). I opened the bidding with 1 No Trump and the opponent passes. Dan bids 6 Diamonds....the

opponent now asks me if that is a six-level transfer to hearts. I shrugged and said, "yeah I guess." He proceeds to pass and without a hitch, I bid 6 Hearts. Dan, who was a little flustered at this point...reaches in the bidding box and bids 7 Diamonds. The table starts to laughing and I subsequently passed. 7 Diamonds is cold and we earn a top score as everyone else is in 6 making 7 or less. We still remind them of that score to this day. It is great fun to be at the clubhouse with my father playing the games that he and my grandfather spent a large amount of time playing. The steps leading up to the clubhouse, that were sold to raise money for the building after Hurricane Katrina, bear my grandfather and my fathers' names. My grandfather is one of the most special people who had an influence on my life and I think of him a lot while playing bridge. Maybe he and I will one day play a few rounds together...at least I will halfway know what I am doing by then.