



Paul Soper Tribute

Paul Soper, my (Marc Hay's) best friend, mentor and bridge partner for over eleven years, passed away this month. He was born and raised in a small city in Illinois. He loved chemistry and economics and majored in both during his college years. He worked as a chemist in a laboratory for the food industry. Every time you get a cup of coffee from a vending machine and add creamer, that was just one of Paul's many accomplishments. He and his wife were both members of the Mensa organization (top 2% of those taking the standard IQ test). I do not qualify for that organization . . . not even close.

The first tournament Paul and I played in helped me become a Life and Bronze Life Master. We have been playing together in tournaments ever since. He was a Sapphire Life Master, and he was close to Diamond. He was a brilliant player and an even better person. He was kind, gentle and had a very subtle sense of humor. We generally played teams, many years on the Dave Douglas team. But when we played pairs, we would go over the analyses of the hands, pointing out our mistakes, mostly mine, in great detail. He was an excellent mentor. Of all the times we played together in tournaments, I never left a tournament without learning something new from Paul. I now realize the pain I must have put Paul through at the bridge table the first few years we played togetherokay, the first eight years we played together . . . okay, all eleven years we played together! Paul was a brilliant bridge player, but he was a far greater person and is deeply missed by all of us who knew him.