

Meet Don Lieberman



I grew up in Brooklyn, New York where I attended James Madison High School, a number of years after Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Charles Schumer and Bernie Sanders.

I was planning to attend Brooklyn College, because it was affordable, but I was recruited to swim for Joseph Verdeur (who was the Michael Phelps of the first half of the century) at Temple University.

I always wanted to be a physician. The Vietnam War was raging and competition to get into medical school was fierce. I was on waiting lists.

Because I did not want to risk dying in a rice paddy, I started flying to European medical schools. I was accepted to the Free University of Antwerp, Belgium.

I asked my girlfriend to marry me and come to Belgium with me. Her parents were furious when she agreed (52 years later we remain happily married with 2 children and 4 grandchildren).

Tuition was \$32 a year including health insurance. Learning Dutch was a challenge. It is still hard for me to believe I became fluent. We remained in Antwerp for two years and then I transferred to Brussels medical school for my third year.

I did very well on Part 1 of the National Medical Boards and I was able to transfer back to the US to the Medical College of Pennsylvania.

After graduation I did a residency in Internal Medicine and a Fellowship in Rheumatology. I eventually became Chair of the department and practiced both rheumatology and internal medicine.

A friend of mine started a company called Medical Broadcasting Company and hired me to be its medical director. I learned how to edit films and I wrote commercials for films and television. At that point I had to decide whether to leave medicine for the corporate world. I chose to continue medicine.

After 20 years in Philadelphia, the West called me and we moved to Tucson. I was an Associate Professor Medicine and taught in the medical school in addition to maintaining a private practice. I retired in 2015.

Both my children live in Colorado (Denver and Boulder) and we spend 6 months a year there. It has been a great joy to be able to watch my grandchildren grow up.

About bridge. I learned the basics years ago but I had no time to play until retirement. Now I play as much as I can. What a great fraternity of people and friends. At tournaments you can play against the great players. It is like playing against Kobe and Shaq but with a chance to occasionally do well.

Rita Smith helped me to get my Life Master status and others helped me to get my Bronze Life Master. Those milestones might not seem lofty to those of you with thousands of points, but the excitement of trying to keep learning and advancing is fulfilling.

Playing on line during the pandemic has been terrific. Bridgebase exposes you to players from all over the world. Most are quite nice, and we are still able to play at the virtual club.

Thank you all for being part of this great fraternity.