

“Rocky, the Man”
(A Collection of Memories from Members)

Unforgettable Rocky – June 1962

Victor M. Matsui, Williamsburg, VA
SHHH/HLAA Board of Trustees
VA State Chapter Coordinator
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It was the Era of President Jack Kennedy and right after Vice-President Lyndon Johnson paced through Karachi, Pakistan, and “found” his famous Mohammed the camel driver. It was June, 1962, when I was first introduced to Rocky Stone in the American Embassy Political Section, where I was assigned. We had several weeks of overlap before he headed home and reassignment to Kathmandu, Nepal. I stayed on for three years following Rocky’s footsteps among the Pakistanis. Rocky had a hearing loss and I was hearing.



Rocky sported a large volume control which hung from his neck and rested prominently in the middle of his chest. His colleagues warned me to watch how he turned his knob since he had a low tolerance for fools and tuned them out when their conversations turned dull. Otherwise, he was pleasant, listened intently and focused on his interlocutor. It was evident then, and as well as later in his second career, that he valued interpersonal relationships. He considered people to be the most important part of his work in Pakistan and this was reflected in his career dealing with hearing loss issues.

The work in the Embassy Political Section dealt with the political developments of the various political factions and interactions with the diplomatic relations in Pakistan. One was charged with the responsibility of making contacts/friends within the diverse communities so that our ambassador and Washington would know what was going on and that there were no surprises. Rocky had the ability to concentrate and focus on what needed to be done. He befriended foreigners easily. Many with his condition might have been discouraged, but not Rocky. He carried on in a positive manner and did not reveal any sense of discomfort when dealing with colleagues and foreigners. In talking to Rocky, I sensed that he had an organized, common sense mind, with excellent recall. He was able to relate with an empathetic skill because he was truly interested in the person he was dealing with.

I followed the call of Horace Greeley to “Go West” from Pakistan into Madagascar, Ivory Coast and Zaire (now Congo). Rocky’s career took him into the more culturally challenging Europe. Over the years, I heard about Rocky’s assignments and retirement and his founding of Self Help for Hard of Hearing People “because there were options for the deaf but so little for hard of hearing people.” I had no contact with Rocky since Karachi until I joined SHHH and attended an event at the National office in 1999. There I met Rocky, who by this time had

lost his vision. We sat and talked. He immediately recognized my voice and he quickly brought us up to date.

Rocky's persuasiveness was still evident and one could sense his dedication and devotion to those with hearing loss. He inspired me to do as much as I could for the organization. I am glad that our paths crossed early on and in later years after his retirement and founding of SHHH/HLAA. Those of us who knew and worked with him are blessed. It is our challenge to convey Rocky's spirit and genius onto our next generation of leaders in our organization.

Rocky Drew People to Him

Mark Ross, Ph.D., Storrs, CT
Rocky Stone Humanitarian Award 2001
SHHH Board of Trustees 1992-1999

I first got to know Rocky (and Ahme, who has played such an important role with him throughout the years) and first learned about the organization during the early days of SHHH. This was when I was a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging, in which Rocky played an important part. I was not a member then, but the concept of such an organization was immediately appealing to me. Even though we barely met then, I felt his charisma and the necessity of his self-help message. As an active audiologist, and a hearing aid user, I recognized the importance and potential impact of such an organization. He pulled it off and I don't know anybody else who could have done the same.



Later, about 1986 or 1988, I had a desire to play an active role in the organization. Rocky arranged it and I've been active ever since, including serving seven years on the Board. These were the days that Rocky also served as the Executive Director of the organization. Ever since that time, my activities and role(s) with SHHH, and now HLAA, has given me more personal and professional satisfaction than most anything else I've done in my life. Rocky made it possible. He had a quality that drew people to him, and made each and every person he met feel that they were somebody special.

When Rocky lost his vision completely, I visited him at the Visual Rehabilitation Center in New Haven. He had me read the drafts of an article he wrote, and his performance just using his newly acquired implant was simply amazing. He was able to correct portions of the draft just through hearing (this was in the days when expectations with implants were still rather low). Then, we went outside the hospital for lunch, to a place he had been once or twice before. Using just his memory he directed me from the hospital to the restaurant, through the city of New Haven and through all the turns we had to take. Again, I couldn't believe his performance. Thank goodness he could direct me also on the return trip!

In short, Rocky's work helped millions of hard of hearing people (even though most don't know of his contributions to their welfare) and helped many others in more direct, personal ways. They will never forget him and neither will I.

The Rocky Stone I Knew

Colin Cantlie, Alberta, Canada

Past President of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

When I met Rocky I met a very caring man who was a passionate visionary full of intellectual ideas and always enthusiastic and interested in people. His sense of humor was in abundance as he worked tirelessly on behalf of others, never complaining but rather recruiting others to join him in his task to make society a better place for everyone. I met a man who championed fairness and understanding all the while pushing his own frailties to one side. His faith was in the forefront and was his comforter and strength throughout his life. It was my very great honor to call him “friend;” he was there for me and hopefully I was there for him.



As the new president of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA), I wanted very much to talk to Rocky. I was seeking approaches to benefit hard of hearing/late-deafened Canadians. I met with Rocky in his suite at the Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH) Convention in Minneapolis. Immediately, he put us at ease. I met a man with such dire devotion and inner strength, a man who claimed the same passions and ideas as mine. Time passed quickly as Rocky and I engaged in a most fruitful discussion, never realizing that our first meeting would be the foundation for our friendship and devotion for each other. That eventful meeting only reinforced my belief of “hands across the border” between our two countries for the community of hard of hearing/late-deafened persons.

Rocky knew the pride I had for my Scottish heritage, my loyalty for people and freshman approach to the non-profit organizations. His clarity was remarkable when addressing my ideas and his vision for the future was breathtaking. He took great glee in calling me “Irish” knowing that I would react. The first couple of times, I thought...he wasn’t listening when mentioning my heritage and I would correct him. He would beam that wonderful heartwarming smile as to say, I got you!

It was truly an honor when Rocky gave me a copy of his book, a book I have read many times. On the front flyleaf he wrote “*To Colin, What can I say. You are such a wonderful example to all of us Irish. – Rocky.*” His comments to me are echoed back to Rocky. He was a good leader who knew how to get the best out of people.

When I became the president of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, I decided to market myself for CHHA. I needed something simple and yet memorable. Being that I am from Calgary, Alberta, the home of the Calgary Stampede, it was natural that I would have as my trademark “the White Stetson” hat. Little did I know that he too wore a hat. Hats became the symbol of our lasting bond and friendship. To this day, I often think of my dear friend Rocky and thank our Lord for the opportunity of that first meeting and how it developed into such a strong bond for each other.

Rocky honored the CHHA by travelling to two of our conferences where he spoke of the importance of believing in yourself and having confidence to go forth and do what must be done to make this a better place and a more inclusive society for everyone. He spoke to our fledgling

Young Adults group inspiring them by saying that anything is possible. He never used notes and yet he could speak of facts and dates to reinforce his points of discussion. He had a wonderful memory and mind and it was evident that people meant so much to him. His family was paramount and his work with SHHH was near and dear to his heart.

I will always remember when Rocky and I were having some fun in front of the CHHA Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland. We clowned around and traded hats. Our hats were important to us and it was then that we became one. Rocky was an amazing human being who cared for so many. His grace and kindness to the people he served was truly a testament to him and his family.

To Ahme, the love you had for each other was strong and endearing to us all. You were a remarkable team. He gained strength because of you and your beautiful family as I am sure was the case in reverse.

Rocky said in his book, *An Invisible Condition – The Human Side of Hearing Loss*, “Self-esteem and confidence rise through knowledge and shared experiences.” (page 71). That was surely the case between Rocky and Irish. In closing, he said it so eloquently in his book: *Now, SHHH must move on with confidence. To me, each of our lives is like a thread woven into a tapestry of history. We are all part of a whole. Some of you, when you joined SHHH, had to regain your spirit. You lit a candle and joined a crusade. Now you are being asked to carry the torch. You have the capability for taking the torch from here to... anywhere.*

A Unique and Amazing Individual

*Richard Twitchell, Chattanooga, TN
Chattanooga TN Chapter*

Once upon a time, long, long ago (1988), my wife went on a trip. Alone. To a city in New York called Rochester. Nothing unusual here – except that just a few years prior to this time, my wife, Nelda, had experienced a sudden profound hearing loss, and she had never – NEVER – made a trip like this, to a place that she had never been before, to attend a meeting where she didn't know anyone, and to meet with an organization that was somewhat unfamiliar to her. Never. Oh yes – she had been a member of a local Chapter of SHHH for several years, but she had never been to any of the state or National meetings or conventions. Chattanooga had established a Chapter of SHHH in 1983, and I had become a member of SHHH along with my wife. One big difference. I was (am) hearing – and I was really not sure where I would fit into an organization where all of the members were hard of hearing, but I thought that I could support my wife's efforts to adjust to her hearing loss. When she returned home the next week, she was a different person; totally enthusiastic about what she had experienced, and totally enthusiastic about this SHHH organization. She told me that she had even met the individual who had started SHHH and she said that she hoped I would have the chance to meet him – that I would really be impressed.



In the next year, our family had a summer vacation trip to New England, and we ended up in Bethesda where the annual convention of SHHH was being held. At that time, in fact, I did have the opportunity to meet this most unusual individual – a man named Rocky Stone. Once again, she was correct – I was totally impressed. While there were always a myriad number of details associated with the convention that needed his personal attention, he never seemed to be too busy to take time for a chat. The status of my hearing (I was really self-conscious at this convention because I didn't have a hearing aid) never made a difference. His conversations were cordial and he made each individual feel that he was happy to see them – just like members of this great big family. Truly, I had met a really unique and amazing individual – a giant among his peers.

Well, that was 1989 – and like any good family reunion, I continued to go to the SHHH conventions with my wife, and at each convention I had the opportunity to renew my association with Rocky. He always remembered where your home was located, and perhaps some facts about your family or facts concerning your home Chapter or home state. It seemed that he knew absolutely everyone at the convention. More than that, he never met a stranger – at least they were not a stranger for more than the time that was required to make the initial introduction.

Over the years, and many more conventions, there were changes evident in this giant of a man. There was the cochlear implant that brought on the big broad-brimmed hat. It seemed appropriate to think of the big hat and big heart. Then later on, with his vision failing, his movement around the convention halls was restricted – but his presence was always there – you could feel it in the air! When observing him in the venue that he loved – having conversation with his old friends or old friends that he had just met – one knew that they were in the presence of a true icon.

As the years have gone on, the conventions have continued, and although we do not physically see Rocky, his presence is there each time that we gather together. At each convention, I miss him - we miss him.

A Special Friendship

*Bob Branigin, Seattle, WA
Seattle WA Chapter*

The Seattle Chapter started with only about six people and I was one of them. The Chapter grew to about 80 though a lot of members lost interest after a couple of years. In 1982, Rocky came to Seattle and met with our members at a private club. About 50 people came to hear him. I was very impressed with his speech. He gave a great talk about accessibility with hearing loss.

I was introduced to Rocky and we became friends. I learned a lot from him and I think he learned from me since I would tell him stories as I was born with a hearing loss and he wasn't. I remember at the first convention in Chicago,



Bob with Rocky, Ahme and Julie Olson

Rocky taught everybody a lot of things. He was a great leader.

My most cherished memory of Rocky is that he would make the time to have breakfast or lunch with me at every convention from his retirement up until his passing. He would tell me serious things and share his concern for SHHH/HLAA. He had a great sense of humor and would tell me jokes. He would joke with me about who will be the last person to break the record of attending every convention since the first one in Chicago. At the present time [February 2009] Sue Miller of Rochester, NY, and I are the only two people who have been to all of the conventions.

I remember with a smile when Rocky was in Seattle attending the convention, he told the audience of about 1,000, "Everybody says it rains too much in Seattle and he had not seen a drop of rain." Hearing this, the audience applauded. About 12 years ago, Rocky and Ahme wanted to attend an Audiologist Convention and all of the hotels were full so I put them up at the Washington Athletic Club where I am a member. I have many wonderful memories of Rocky as I was very fortunate to meet and know such a great person. I miss him very much.

Sudden Hearing Loss Enhanced Her Life

Anne Pope, New York City, NY

SHHH/HLAA Board of Trustees

Past President 2006-2008

Inaugurator, HLAA Walk4Hearing™

Author, Hear: Solutions, Skills and Sources for People with Hearing Loss

(Written in collaboration with SHHH)

I first saw Rocky at the Little Rock convention in 1990. He was the star – never alone, always surrounded by crowds of adoring people. I just remember that at each convention, he was the central spirit. And I was completely awe struck. Here was the man whose wisdom, spirit, and tenacity had made it possible for me to have a life after my sudden hearing loss.

I didn't actually get to know Rocky until I joined the board in 2001. By that time, he had a cochlear implant and substantial loss of eyesight. But, he had the same indomitable spirit, the same compelling personality, the same puckish sense of humor, and the same devotion to the cause that had made SHHH a reality and begun to change the world for all of us with hearing loss.

Rocky was so warm, so informal, so completely engaging, that awe for his person vanished. We went through some pretty tough times in those years. But, even during our lowest moments, Rocky was confident that the organization would survive and thrive.

There is no person other than my family who has affected my life as much as Rocky Stone and SHHH/HLAA. I lived with a sudden and severe hearing loss for five years before finding SHHH – years that were barely tolerable. I blamed myself for being a wimp. What a relief it was and how enormously empowering to find that there were strategies I could practice,



Anne with husband John

technology I could use, and others I could meet who could help show me the way. Rocky Stone and SHHH/HLAA not only gave me back my life but also enhanced it to a degree I would never have thought possible. There is no question that my loss has actually been my gain.

There were two aspects of Rocky that I particularly enjoyed and valued.

First – his jokes. Never has there been anyone who had a greater collection of jokes at the tip of his tongue. He must have had hundreds. And he used them to charm, to teach, and to defuse awkward situations in a masterful way.

Second – his strategy for the organization. He saw SHHH as a changing and constantly evolving entity. He was always looking ahead at what else needed to be done.

Rocky understood that as important as personal advocacy was, it wasn't enough. The next step was taking the cause to the policy makers on Capitol Hill, rallying the groups across the country to teach legislators that our needs required specific accommodations.

Making hearing loss an issue of national concern was necessary before we could live full lives. And finally, in the last few years of his life, he realized that SHHH/HLAA couldn't do all of this alone – that we would need to work as a team with all the other groups whose members either have hearing loss or treat it. This flexibility, this ability to change with the times in order to succeed, is an inspiring example for us all.

I feel very privileged to have known Rocky. In every culture, in every generation, a few rare people have keener insight than most. They look at a problem through a different lens; they see a way past a problem long unsolved.

But seeing the solution is really just the beginning. Even fewer people have the personality required to move that vision forward – the optimism to believe that their ideas will prevail, the energy to engage and enlist supporters and the perseverance to continue the journey. Our great good fortune was that Rocky had it all. Our great challenge is to ensure that his extraordinary gift to us is in turn passed on to others.

His Amazing Memory

*Debbie Mohny, Boulder, CO
Colorado State Chapter Coordinator*

I met Rocky Stone for the first time at the SHHH Convention in New Orleans. He was as thrilled to meet me as I was to meet him. The first thing he asked me was how Ann Pruitt was doing, as Ann had been the State Coordinator in Colorado for years and had also served on the SHHH Board of Trustees. At every convention I saw Rocky at after that, up through the Omaha Convention, he would remember me and always ask me about Ann. I was amazed at his memory.

Rocky really enjoyed speaking to the membership. One of my favorite times was hearing his presentations to and about the Rocky Stone Humanitarian Award winners at convention banquets.



A Drink and Good Food

*Flo Innes, Sarasota, FL
Sarasota FL Chapter*

Rocky and his wife came to visit friends here in Sarasota. I invited them to our SHHH meeting and was so happy to hear they accepted the invitation. I wanted so much to show off our Chapter and stayed up all night cooking so I have some unique nibbles. I set up the tables, etc., but had to rush home to take my husband to the hospital so I did not meet him then.



Rocky loved my cooking – he always came to my Convention Party. Members were always so surprised he would come. They asked me how I got him to come – I told them, give him a drink and good food and he will come.



*Flo with Steve Noroian,
Claire Hogan, Melanie Stone
Hogan and Rocky*

The Golf Game

*George Kosovich, Rockville, MD
Rocky Stone Humanitarian Award 1998
SHHH Board of Trustees 1998-1990*

I don't know how many years ago but I'm pretty sure it was before 2000, somewhere between 1995 and 1999. It had to be some time in the spring since it was not a hot and humid day in Maryland. Rocky and I played nine holes of golf at the Falls Road golf course which at that time was considered to not be too difficult (if one has much vision). I had never guided a blind person on a golf course but I was pretty sure that Rocky and I, with all our athletic prowess would figure it out eventually. The course was up and down, hilly, with a couple of small ponds but not many sand traps. Rocky had some peripheral vision but macular degeneration made him legally blind.



So, it was my privilege to tell Rocky what the layout for each hole was (how far and wide the fairway was) and how far the putting green was and where the hole was. Now, Rocky could see the ball on the tee and on the ground when he was close to the ball. It was my job to describe to him where the ball went after he hit it, describing how it took off (to the right, left or straight down the middle). We would chat as we walked from hole to hole, telling golf stories and jokes between shots.

I was stunned to see some of Rocky's shots. He proved to have a pretty good swing that he must have practiced traveling around the world and playing with a lot of "Hot Shots!" I was about an 8 handicap then and he kept right up with me that day and shot a score in the low 40s. He did say, with a giveaway grin, that "he never was good at math and finding lost golf balls!"

He Asked Us All to Stay Close

Marcia Dugan, Penn Yan, NY

*Rocky Stone Humanitarian Award 2002
SHHH/HLAA Board of Trustees 1991-2000
Past President 1996-1998*

*Past President International Federation of Hard of Hearing People
Author, Keys to Living with Hearing Loss
(Written in collaboration with SHHH)*

There are so many things I remember about Rocky. I met him at a meeting of the Council for Better Hearing and Speech Month in the late '80s. He asked if I had t-coils in my aids. I said I did and he told me he had brought a loop with him and suggested I might want to use it. It was the first time I learned about portable loops.



I always admired Rocky's gift of caring, his ability to articulate information and support, his uncanny knowledge about all aspects of hearing loss, and [after losing his sight] his memory of everyone's voice so that he immediately recognized who he was speaking to. He taught us all to be sharers of hope, help, and happiness.

He came to speak to the Rochester Chapter and stayed in Penn Yan at my home. He asked if I played gin. What he did not know was that I had been playing since I was in elementary school and was pretty good. He was surprised to be skunked!

And, of course, I remember his kind words and compliments when I received the Rocky Stone Award. How honored I was to receive that award from him.

Keep the faith, and as Rocky would say, "Stay close."

Rocky Was My Soul Buddy

*Barbara N. Thomas, Colorado Springs, CO
Former SHHH/HLAA Staff*

I just remember that Rocky was always there for me and a soul buddy. I knew that he was one of those very special people that you are lucky to meet once in a lifetime. When I worked at the National office, he called me frequently and told me one of his special jokes which always made my day.

I wish I had a special story to share, but Rocky was his own special story.



A Proud Partner

Claude Stout, Silver Spring, MD

Executive Director, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc.

TDI extends its heartfelt congratulations to Hearing Loss Association of America on the occasion of its 30th Anniversary. For HLAA to survive thirty years in the non-profit sector is a milestone by itself. TDI is proud to partner with HLAA, a sister consumer advocacy organization on access issues in telecommunications, media, and information technology that affect all Americans, especially those who are deaf and hard of hearing.



We value having HLAA's expertise and user experience when addressing issues like hearing aid compatibility, captioned telephone services, and TV captioning. By sharing our limited resources, the possibilities are endless in the good work we do for all people with hearing loss.

HLAA is striving well under today's economic conditions, and is positioned to do well in the future under the able leadership of Executive Director Brenda Battat. She is a shining example where Rocky excelled for HLAA's survival today. The effective leadership we see at HLAA is largely based on what others have picked up to continue the great work done by pioneers.

Another important example is seeing Rocky Stone's family preserve the ideals and values that Rocky Stone envisioned for HLAA, and we truly commend Mike Stone for stepping up to serve as your president. To quote the title of a famous poem by Robert Frost, Rocky Stone took "the road not taken." I have had the pleasure to meet him a few times. He was a big proponent for collaboration between national organizations of, for, or by the deaf and hard of hearing. He was the first to say and make clear to the rest of us, that "one size doesn't fit all" in terms of coping with one's needs, and hearing amplification support for Americans who lose hearing later in life. He took the unfamiliar path by establishing a new organization to address this special constituency's needs at local, state, and national levels. He challenged the rest of us to understand that there are separate needs and issues of Americans who are hard of hearing, and to provide appropriate resources and services to help them retain their standing in society. Through us, his work still lives on.

The Frog with a 10-Gallon Hat

*Joan P. Ireland, San Diego, CA
Beaumont CA Chapter*

In 1992 I attended a speech-reading class near the San Diego Sports Arena only to learn the instructor was retiring. The class then was urged by Julie Mason to keep meeting but as an SHHH group, and thus began the Sports Arena Group and a better life for all of us.

The San Diego SHHH Convention soon followed, and we found that everything Julie had promised us about SHHH really was true, not the least of which was the amazing, charismatic Executive Director Rocky Stone!



Fortunate in knowing Rocky personally, I consider him one of the most influential people in my life. You always felt he genuinely cared about you and how your life was going. He inspired and encouraged you to live life to the fullest despite your hearing loss, and fullest, at least to me, meant once you've learned from SHHH/HLAA how to help yourself, you go on to help others learn as well. He was the wind at my back and, to borrow from a song, "the wind beneath my wings."

When Rocky was recovering from his hip replacement surgery I searched unsuccessfully for a unique "get-well" card for this very unique man. Suddenly, I spied a funny stuffed frog, and, knowing Rocky's delicious sense of humor – he always greeted you with a joke – decided then and there to give that frog some shoes and a 10-gallon hat and send it along with a poem to Rocky, hoping it would prompt a chuckle or two.

At the following convention I heard that Rocky wanted to see me. When I finally found him, he told me what a kick he got out of the frog and how it had a permanent place sitting on the pillow on his bed! I was really touched to hear from Ahme after his death that the little frog with the Rocky hat remained on his pillow.

A very happy Rocky swinging away on the dance floor at the New Orleans Convention Mardi Gras party and another of Rocky (with Betty Coombs) all decked out in top hat and tails are my favorites, depicting the way I'll always remember him: enjoying life to the fullest despite his disabilities.

We Will Never Forget Him

Mellie & “Capt Bob” Bratcher, Odessa, TX

Everyone remembers Rocky and his cowboy hat. He always wore it everywhere and that was what I remember the first time we met. He and Ahme were such a great couple. I can still see them walking down the hall at our first SHHH convention. They stopped and shook our hands and talked to us. I felt in awe of him and yet felt completely at ease in their company. After that first introduction, they both called us by name whenever we would meet.

Later, at the opening session, we heard his story and how he started SHHH. I remember him saying, “I may have to be blind, but I don’t have to be deaf any longer. With a cochlear implant, people who are deaf CAN hear.”

That got my attention and led Bob to investigate cochlear implants and what they did. I later enjoyed the miracle of which he was speaking.

Rocky was the heart and soul of this wonderful organization. We all knew his health was failing, but had hoped to keep him a bit longer. We will never forget him. He and Ahme will always be in our thoughts and prayers.



On the Basis of Trust

Kate Seelman, Ph.D., Pittsburgh, PA
SHHH Board of Trustees 1988-1993

Rocky and I often took different positions on public policy matters. I was always a little, to a lot more, supportive of social programs while he put great emphasis on individual initiative.



When I indicated that I would like to chair the SHHH Government Affairs Committee, he was perhaps mildly appalled. Nonetheless, he looked me in the eye, indicating that if I could constrain my “radical” approach, he would support my candidacy for the chair. Rocky was a man who valued trusting relationships. On the basis of the trust he placed in me, I chaired the committee.

He Gave Me Reassurance

*Roberta Seidner, Bronx, NY
Westchester NY Chapter*

I remember meeting Rocky Stone at my very first convention in Seattle, WA, in 2002. With his cowboy hat and cute smile, kind words and great enthusiasm for SHHH, it was simply a pleasure being in his company. I recall telling him that this was my first convention and that I was a little bit nervous, he reassured me that all of us felt the same way at one time or another, but that all of us are in the same boat with some sort of hearing loss. He told me to enjoy the convention and to meet new people and to get to see all the latest technology that was on display in the exhibit hall. I immediately felt relaxed, he shook my hand and he said, "I expect to see you at all future conventions!" Funny, I'll never forget that.... He was a great man and I always looked for him and his cowboy hat when I went to other conventions. I truly miss him, he will never be forgotten. I feel honored just to have known him for the short time that I did.

