

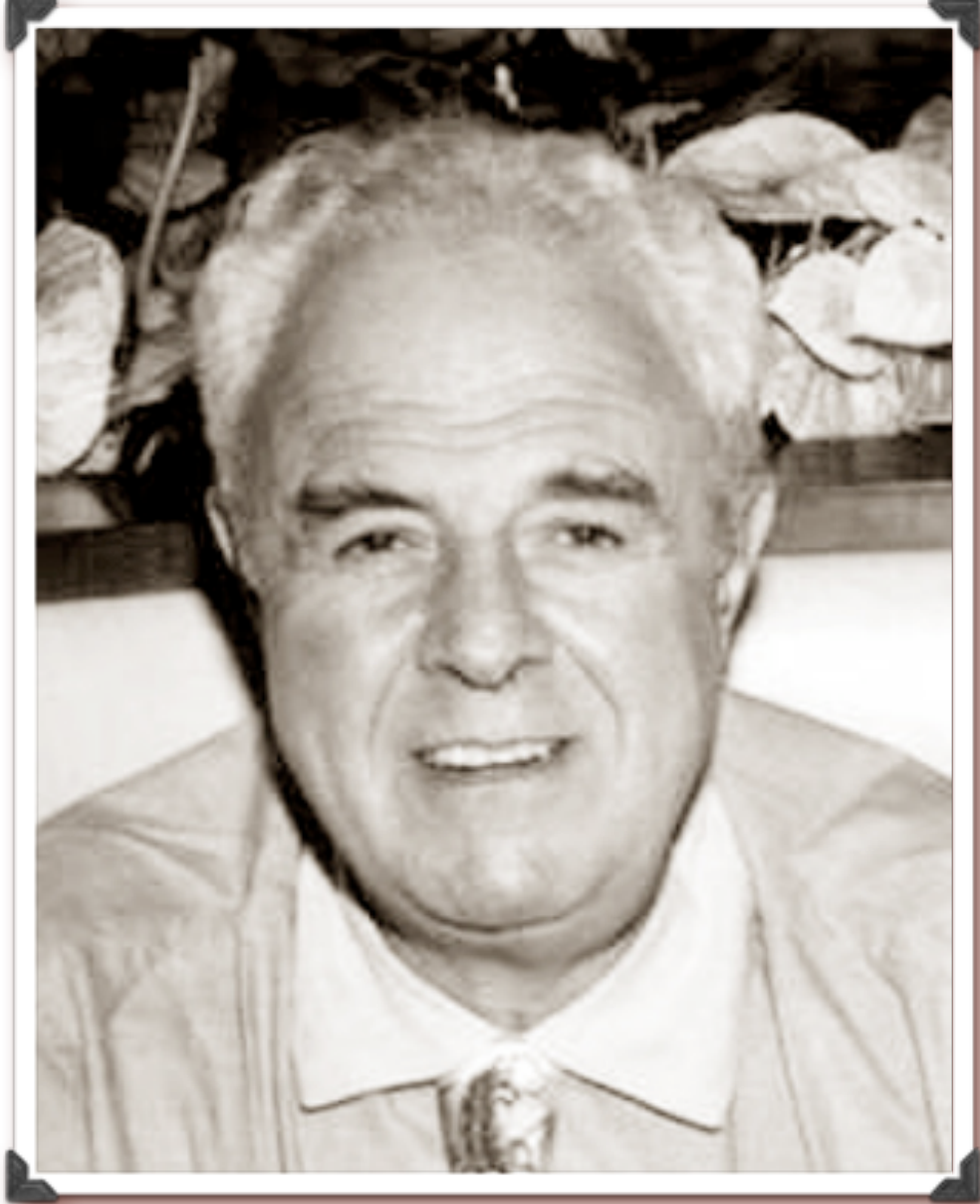
# The New York Times



## Bridge

By Alan Truscott  
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# **Oswald Jacoby**



**Top Expert on Bridge And A Columnist**

Oswald Jacoby, one of the greatest contract bridge players, died of cancer Wednesday at his home in Dallas. He was 81 years old.

Mr. Jacoby was a key member of the Four Aces team that dominated play in the 1930's and won a string of national titles, including the Vanderbilt Knockout Teams and the Spingold Knockout Teams seven times each. He also won the first world team championship in 1936, playing against France in Madison Square Garden with the Four Aces.

Mr. Jacoby also was known as an expert in other card games as well as in backgammon. He wrote many books, and, in 1950, began a bridge column syndicated to several hundred newspapers. His 10,000th column appeared on April 22, 1982, setting a record.

In recent years, the column had been shared with his son James O. Jacoby, who also became a world champion in 1970, when his father was nonplaying captain of the American team.

## **A Native of Brooklyn**

He was born in Brooklyn and had two months of Army service in World War I at the age of 15. After studying at Columbia University he became, at 21, the youngest man ever to qualify as an actuary. His long bridge career began in the 1920's when he began winning tournaments at auction and contract bridge.

He burst into national prominence in December 1931 when Sidney Lenz, then a leader in bridge's establishment, selected him as a partner in a well-publicized challenge rubber bridge match against Ely Culbertson, then an upstart with new theories. Mr. Jacoby withdrew before the match was over in a partnership dispute with Mr. Lenz, creating a sensation.

Mr. Jacoby was playing in a national championship in Richmond when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He departed immediately to join the Navy and served as a code expert, both during World War II and in the Korean War, reaching the rank of lieutenant commander.

When he returned to tournament play he found that he had been overtaken by Charles Goren at the head of the national master-point standings. He regained the top spot in 1962. Between 1959 and 1963 he was a four-time winner of the McKenney Trophy, for overall tournament performance, and became the first player to win 1,000 master-points in a year. On Harvard's Board of Visitors

He continued to practice as an actuary, and served six years on the board of visitors of Harvard University.

Mr. Jacoby's well-deserved reputation for defensive skill was demonstrated on the diagramed deal, from the Culbertson-Lenz match. He was happy to make a penalty double when Josephine Culbertson, on his right, offered a jump overcall in spades, and had some thinking to do when he led the diamond ace and the dummy appeared.

The problem was to cut down the potential club ruffs, and Mr. Jacoby solved it dramatically by shifting to the trump queen. This removed one trump from the dummy, and if South chose to take a club ruff, she would lose an additional trump trick. The result was down two, and without Mr. Jacoby's defense it would have been at most down one. This imaginative maneuver was completely original at the time that he made it.

He pioneered many significant innovations in bridge theory, notably the Jacoby transfer bid, which has been adopted by a majority of experts. In 1983 he was selected as Bridge Personality of the Year by the International Bridge Press Association.

His most remarkable victory occurred last December in Miami Beach. Though already seriously ill, he entered the competition for the Reisinger Trophy, perhaps the toughest national team event, and won. This was the first victory on such a level by an octogenarian.

Besides his son James, he is survived by his wife, Mary Zita Jacoby, and another son, Jon P.

<p>North</p> <p>♠ J9</p> <p>♥ QJ9853</p> <p>♦ J865</p> <p>♣ 7</p>	<p>East (D)</p> <p>♠</p> <p>♥ AK102</p> <p>♦ KQ943</p> <p>♣ 10653</p>
<p>West</p> <p>♠ Q10865</p> <p>♥ 7</p> <p>♦ A72</p> <p>♣ KQ98</p>	<p>South</p> <p>♠ AK7432</p> <p>♥ 64</p> <p>♦ 10</p> <p>♣ AJ42</p>

North and South were vulnerable. The bidding:

East	South	West	North
1 ♦	2 ♠	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		

West led the diamond ace.

**Note:** Hand from the Culbertson-Lenz challenge match in 1931.