

TORRE HOULGATE-WEST



BRIDGE WAS BIG IN TORRE'S CHILDHOOD IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WHERE HER MOTHER PLAYED AFTERNOON BRIDGE WITH FRIENDS, ALL WEARING HATS AND GLOVES AND SIPPING TEA OR OTHER POTABLES. IN THE EVENINGS, HER PARENTS PLAYED BRIDGE RAUCOUSLY WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

HOWEVER, TORRE DID NOT LEARN TO PLAY BRIDGE UNTIL SHE WAS 50, AND WANTED SOME MEMORY BOOSTING. GIVEN THE CHOICE OF LEARNING ANOTHER LANGUAGE, PLAYING SERIOUS CHESS, OR PLAYING SERIOUS BRIDGE, SHE CHOSE BRIDGE BECAUSE OF THE LONG-TERM INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE THAT ALSO HAD A PEOPLE CONNECTION.

SHE WENT FROM FORGETTING WHAT WAS TRUMP IN HER FIRST GAMES TO REPLAYING HANDS IN HER HEAD DAYS AFTERWARD.

HER FIRST LESSONS WERE IN SAN LUIS OBISPO WITH THE LEGENDARY JANICE VIVRETTE WHO BECAME HER MODEL AND MENTOR. ACCORDING TO TORRE, JANICE WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY TEACHER WITH PATIENCE, GOODWILL, AND HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS. "A TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW," SAYS TORRE.

TORRE FINDS THAT PART OF HER CREATIVE URGE IS SATISFIED BY THE GAME OF BRIDGE. SHE DESCRIBES IT AS A GAME OF INFINITE VARIETY, BOTH ADDICTIVE AND ANAESTHETIC. THE CONCENTRATION REQUIRED MAKES YOU FORGET YOUR TROUBLES.

TORRE IS A DIRECTOR, ACBL TEACHER, AND EASYBRIDGE PRESENTER. A FEW YEARS AGO SHE WAS AWARDED "MASTER TEACHER" STATUS BY THE AMERICAN BRIDGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, AND CURRENTLY TEACHES THE NOVICE GROUP BEFORE ARROYO GRANDE'S THURSDAY BRIDGE GAME.

TORRE HAS BEEN MARRIED TO HER THIRD HUSBAND AND SWEETHEART, LAURENCE HOULGATE, FOR 43 YEARS. SHE HAS TRAVELLED WIDELY, PLAYING BRIDGE IN PLACES SHE VISITS.

CURRENT GOAL? "GOLD LIFE MASTER BY THE AGE OF 80."