



## **Biographies of Past Presidents**

### **Stuart Price Cramer, Fifty-second President**

Stuart P. Cramer was Rotary President for two consecutive fiscal years, 1979-1980 and 1980-1981. Stuart had so many wonderful acknowledgements, it is very hard for one to write a short story about this man. Stu (as he was affectionately called by his peers in Vermilion) was born in Cleveland on July 16th 1911 and passed on at his daughter Hazel's home in Ithaca, New York on April 15th 2003 at the age of 91. Stu was the older of the two brothers in the family. In Stu's early years, his father was in the lumber business. Later one, while living in Madison Ohio during the "Great Depression," Stu and his brother, Al ran a riding school. After graduation from Cleveland Heights High, he went on to Hiram College for two years, transferring to Western Reserve University where he received his law degree. The year was 1936. One year later, Stu was admitted to the Ohio Bar. Stewart and Hazel Wurster were married in 1936. They had one child, Hazel, born in 1942.

As was written by Philip Willmarth in the acknowledgements in Stuart Cramer's book, "Germain the Wizard," Philip wrote, "The book is by Stuart P. Cramer, Magician, bibliographer of Karl Germain, Civil War historian and editor, Table war-games enthusiast, television pioneer, trade show magician, naval officer, advertising executive, vice-president of DV Display Corporation, cryptographer, and attorney at law. It is also by Remarc the magician; by J. Jefferson Palmer: by Kamain, Indian trade show performer; by Chan Wing, Oriental conjuror; by Germer C. Wrist, spoof speaker; by Professor Nemo, kid-show performer; and by Mr. Meriweather, magical television weatherman and Ohio Bell tele-magician. All of these, of course, are the show names of Stuart Cramer, the magician, in his many theatrical characterizations."

Stu was introduced to the wonders of magic in 1918 by his uncle, Herbert L. Cope, a lyceum circuit speaker. The "Great Blackstone" was one of Stu's mentors who he first met in 1925. Stu never forgot Blackstone's kindness which was reflected in Stu throughout his life. The person who undoubtedly touched and inspired Stuart's life the most was the famous magician, Karl Germain. Stu's daughter, Hazel Cramer stated that Germain was Stuart's mentor and teacher of magic. Karl Germain, living in Cleveland, Ohio became blind in his later years and had to end his stage career. At this point in time, according to Hazel, Stu, Karl's long time companion acquired the task of care-giver to Germain. This bonding of these two magicians inspired Stu to author the book, "Germain the Wizard."



During WWII, he became a naval officer. His magic profession went with him in his service to his Country. He was loaned to the U.S.O. to entertain the troops during these times of war. While serving his Country, Stu became a cryptographer and frequently entertained during this naval tour of duty.

Getting to the local scene, in 1959-1961, Stu fronted the Ohio Bell “Telemagician,” in Cleveland, Ohio on a daily television weather show. He would do a new trick each day either before or after he talked about the local weather situation. This writer can remember seeing Stuart on TV doing his act using the assistance of an attractive lady by his side helping out. The local Rotarians who were members during Stuart’s long Rotary membership enjoyed Stuart doing his magical acts every time he got the chance. One of Stu’s jobs in the club was to indoctrinate the newest members into Rotary. He would bring each one up front to give him/her the Rotary story which would end with either a rope trick or his famous Chinese “three ring” trick.

In 1975, Stu was elected president of the Vermilion, Ohio Chamber of Commerce. He also served on the Board of Directors of Linwood Park an area adjacent to the shores of Lake Erie that reminds the visitor of a quaint New England town by the sea shore. Stuart’s maternal grandfather built some of the still standing “Cape Cod” Colonial style homes in Linwood Park, Vermilion, Ohio. He also served as president of the local Historical Society. He had a vast interest in the Civil War and was a learned student of this war. He gave several talks about the Generals of the War; i.e., how each contributed (or their shortfalls) to the cause. He also had an extensive lead soldier collection which he would display at several locations in town exhibiting a scene of a battle in the Civil War period.

With all of Stu’s credits, talents and wonderful personality, around the town of Vermilion, he was “just one of the boys” so to speak when he was conversing with the locals. It was very hard to say goodbye to Stuart P. Cramer the day that he decided that it was time to change his residence from Vermilion, Ohio over to Ithaca, New York to be near his daughter, Hazel who would give him her tender loving care.

As one of the authors so perfectly put it after Stu’s passing, “May he rest in peace knowing he has given back so much to this (his) art he loved; he left many friends and admirers, and many wonderful memories.