



**FISM**<sup>TM</sup>

Fédération Internationale des Sociétés Magiques  
International Federation of Magic Societies

# FISM Newsletter

**Nr. 98 – October 2021**

**To all Presidents of the FISM member societies  
and Delegates in the GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the FISM**

Dear Mr. President, Dear Friend in Magic,

**GERRIT BRENGMAN (April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1944-August 16<sup>th</sup> 2021)**

When someone writes about a dear friend who passed away, he generally cares about listing his personal achievements rather than dealing with his moral, human values. Indeed I personally lived a great part of my "magic" life with Gerrit more than twenty years in the FISM where he was my vice-president for years. Therefore, I can say I knew him very well and my knowledge of him is based on the many aspects of his real life and not on hearsay, which those who claim to know ignore or forget (more or less voluntarily). Few people know, for instance, that the FISM competition rules, that are considered the most important regulations of the Federation, were conceived and written down by him. He had a deep knowledge of every aspect and procedure of each competition, and it is also for this reason I chose him (unanimously accepted by the FISM Board) as President of the Jury in our world competitions. We had been invited and participated together in innumerable contests in every part of the planet. And what he used to leave was a feeling of respect and esteem, that will never fade away, together with his unquestionable competence. Indeed, in life what "a man sows, so shall he reap", which is far stronger and more important than any superficial and conventional comment.

For the rest I would need a book to describe the innumerable experiences, anecdotes, episodes we shared together all around the world thanks to magic: from Cuba to Shanghai, to London, Mexico and Japan, just to mention a few places that were the scene and the reason to unforgettable and dear memories that strengthened our deep, true friendship. Only now I can tell you a secret which we kept, by mutual consent, for a long time: very few people knew how deep our feelings were, also because it was a close relationship. We did not want it to be contaminated by the abused use of the word "friendship".

Already at the age of 15 age, Gerrit got interested in magic, but it is only after leaving Zaïre where he had been an English teacher (1966-1972), that he started practicing and performing his passion for magic. Then, while working on sales and international marketing activities at the same time, he greatly widened his passion by humouristic and funny "parlour" shows.

In those years too he started collaborating with Mephisto (one of the most important magic dealers in Europe), first as editor of *De Magiër*, under the pseudonym of Puck, and then as organizer and MC of the famous *Mephisto Days*. At that time too I met with Gerrit in Tokio (1985). He was the chairman of several Flemish magic associations, while performing his proper show at *The Magic Rubens* in Brussels.

With the passing of the years his international profile became more and more recognized and respected: artist, organizer, coach, jury member at the same time. As a FISM delegate, he had been a member of the juries since 1982 in countless competitions besides the 6 continental and 8 world championships of FISM, without forgetting the 29 editions of the McMillan convention in London and of the Club Magico Italiano in Abano (Italy). His passion for magic was proved also by his enormous library he would never forget to expand (when we participated together in the Blackpool convention, he came back home with suitcases full of books!).

In 2000 he was elected as Deputy General Secretary (in the same FISM team of which I was the new treasurer). Later he would be appointed Vice President of General Affairs. And even after I was elected as the President of FISM in 2012, he would never change his specifications. The honors he received confirm the greatness of Gerrit's personality:

- Honorary member of the CBI,
- Honorary member of the Club Magico Italiano,

- Life Time Achievement Award, 2011, Blackpool,
- Murray Award of Merit, 2012,
- Magic Victoria Award for his contribution to promote the art of magic,
- FISM International Consultant, 2018, Busan (Korea).

And he did all that in spite of the sword of Damocles which was floating over his head and severely influencing his health. Surely the bad news was a bolt from the blue after coming back from the FISM continental championship in Louisville, in the USA, in 2008. However, Gerrit always reacted like "a lion", with humor and optimism, even in the toughest moments. As his close friend, I was struck by his moral strength that helped me overcome some difficult times. He could talk humorously and smilingly about things that are a stab in the heart. I remember him, while he was in intensive care in the face of extreme suffering, describing me what was happening to him and what he was trying to do. I would say to him, "*Gerrit, we should make a video of them all*", because, even amid his sufferings, he succeeded in making me burst out laughing though he was talking about a tragedy; and he usually concluded by saying, "*Apart from that...everything's fine!*". These are dear memories that are unforgettable, that change our perception of life, that make us distinguish "who's who" among the chattering of "insignificant" people who are too often close to us, the same who claim they possess the truth, the same who claim they are great, without being aware that they are leaving no marks on our minds.

On the contrary Gerrit left an indelible mark, a dear memory of his moral rectitude, of the great person he was in our hearts.



Best regards,

*Domenico Dante*  
 Domenico Dante  
 International President

