



Anthony Darkstone Brook In Conversation With Dan Garrett

In the world of magic Dan Garrett is a living legend. In the world of show business Dan Garrett is highly respected as a complete Magical Entertainer. Over the years many articles have been written about Dan Garrett. In August 1998, he appeared on the front cover of 'The Linking Ring'. In August 1994, he appeared on the cover of 'M-U-M'. The article in 'The Linking Ring' was written by the Editor, Phil Wilmarth and the article in M-U-M was also written by the Editor, Dave Goodsell. Both of them describe Dan as a warm, generous and sincere human being.

They also include the fact that Dan Garrett possesses one of the finest thinking minds in magic. Dan and his wife Carol live in Atlanta, in the state of Georgia, USA. Dan has a friendly open personality and is one of those people that you like instantly. From the moment you meet Dan Garrett, he has a way of making you feel that he is an old and trusted friend that you have known for years. This wonderful and charming personality he uses well to connect with audiences all over the world. Many Magicians claim to be International stars. In Dan's case this is really true. There are probably very few countries that Dan hasn't performed. It is easier to name the countries that Dan has not visited than to list the places all over the world that he has performed and/or lectured.

In 1994, Dan was elected President of The Society of American Magicians. Previous names who were Presidents of The Society of American Magicians were Harry Kellar, Jean Hugard, Harry Houdini, Howard Thurston, Nate Leipzig, Harlan Tarbell, Milbourne Christopher to name but a few. Apart from The Magic Circle, The Society of American Magicians is the oldest magical society in the world.

Dan has appeared on stage, cabaret and Television all over the world. He is one the world's leading professional Magicians and is always in great demand to perform and to lecture. Almost every magic convention at some time or another invited Dan to perform and /or lecture.

Some of Dan Garrett's achievements :-

- Winner of The Best of Atlanta Award (six times)
- Winner of the IBM Linking Ring Trophy 1979
- Winner of The IBM Merit Award 1991
- Winner - Atlanta Harvest of Magic
- Winner- Florida State Magicians Association
- Winner- Georgia Magic Club
- Winner- Chattanooga Harvest of Magic
- Winner- Southeastern Association of Magicians
- Winner- Texas Association of Magicians
- Winner- Greater Atlanta Magician of The Year Award (several times)
- President of The Society of American Magicians 1994-1995
- Member of The Inner Magic Circle
- Member of The Panel of Magic Advisors – MagicWebChannel
- World Class Writer, Lecturer and Performer

There are many other awards and honours that are attached to Dan Garrett's name. To list all his achievements would require a book. Some of the things that have been said about Dan Garrett :-

"Dan is one of magic's most entertainingly creative minds - a man who knows how to make magic entertaining" - **David Cpperfield**

"If you get a chance to see Dan Garrett perform, don't miss it. He is a scholar, a magician and a gentleman in the finest sense" - **Dave Goodsell**

" My wife Charlotte says you are the best Magician she ever saw perform, and I agree." - **Martin Gardner**

"One of the true gentlemen in the world of magic, and one of my favorite magicians. A caring, giving performer, and a wonderful entertainer. And he always remembers my appearance on television with Joey Bishop!" - **Steve Dacri**

Obviously, these great names in magic know what they are talking about. This is just a small sample of what the great names of Magic feel about Dan Garrett. Despite all this Dan remains a humble and quiet man. A man with an incredible capacity for innovation and creativity. Above all, a true gentleman. In conversation, I put the following questions to him:-



ADB: Is it true that for the last 20 years you have been one of the highest paid professional magicians?

DG: Magic has been good to me. It has enabled me to make a very good living and brought me lots of wonderful friends all over the world. Money isn't everything but it helps to have enough of it to live well and play some golf.

ADB: Dan, you mentioned golf, are you a keen golfer?

DG: Well, not really. My wife Carol is a keen golfer and in the early days she supported me fully. I feel that the least I can do is to take an active interest in golf for Carol's sake.

ADB: Apart from golf and magic what else interests you?

DG: Life interests me. The power of the human mind interests me. I believe that anyone can do whatever they dream. Having dreams is about being creative. Making dreams become a reality is part of the creative process of Life. Anyone can do it. Everyone should at least try. I love playing the guitar and piano, especially rock and jazz. I love Science Fiction; I love reading Science fiction and Science fiction TV shows and movies. I'm a big fan of 'Babylon 5' and 'Star Trek.' I especially like time-travel movies like 'Back To The Future'. I love playing with my computer and juggling. I also write a lot about magic.

ADB: Juggling?

DG: Yes: A lot of people don't know about Dan Garrett the juggler but it is one of my great passions. I enjoy it and it also helps me to relax. Often when I'm trying to work out a solution to a magical problem I either juggle or play the guitar.

ADB: How did you get started in Magic?

DG: When I was a kid I found a book on magic in my local library and from that moment the only thing that dominated my life was the strong desire to become a magician. Not exactly a highly original answer but that's how I got started.

ADB: You have performed all kinds of magic all over the world; what kind of magic do you like best?

DG: Ah! That's a tough one Tony. I do all kinds of magic. Mental magic, close-up magic, comedy magic, stage, cabaret and I can honestly say that I love all the forms of magic. Magic to me is just that! It's magic! If I please my audience with a good effect then I'm happy.

ADB: As a highly respected International Magical Entertainer can you share some of your philosophy in regard to audiences?

DG: I'll be happy to. Well, ... audiences! It's obvious that we Magicians wouldn't be able to do very much without an audience. It doesn't matter if the audience is just one person or thousands. As Entertainers it is our duty to make sure that they are Entertained. The key word is to entertain your audience no matter how big or small. It is not enough to be clever and have great technical skill.

In my view technical skill is all well and good but the entertainment factor must always come first. I know of some truly great Magical Entertainers who have no technical skill but who can entertain audiences for hours with just one or two simple effects. It really doesn't matter if you can or cannot do a 'double-lift'; what matters, is how well you perform your magic. Magic is a performing art. It must be treated as an art. As a Magician you must reach out and capture your audience. It doesn't matter if you can 'back-palm' one card or a hundred. It matters how you present it to your audience. Good presentation leads to good Entertainment. Magicians must fill their audiences with wonder and amazement. They must reach out and bring wonderment and smiles to an audience.

ADB: You are an inventor and creator of several magical effects. Which one is your favourite?

DG: I love them all. But I suppose the one that most people associate me with is the Rising Card from The Pad Effect. Many years ago M-U-M ran an article about something similar by Martin Lewis. I got thinking about it and designed the apparatus. I had a lot of fun showing it for the first time at the Boston Society of American Magicians convention. It has sort of over the years become my signature effect. In the early days there were no magic shops where I lived so I had to make most of my own props. It was excellent training for me. So I guess making up an effect now comes naturally to me.

ADB: Where do you go for inspiration for your magic?

DG: Chatting to other Magicians and to my own library. Over the years I have been fortunate enough to build up a large library of magic books. One of my favourite things to do is to flick through the books in my library. I used to work across the counter of M& M Magic in Georgia and spent a lot of time demonstrating effects to other magicians. All of this past experience has been a great help to me.

ADB: You spoke about your famous library. What one book would you recommend to young Magicians?

DG: You've put me on the spot Tony. There are so many good books to choose from. But if you really forced me to choose, I would suggest one of my favourites, 'The Trick Brain' by Dariel Fitzkee.

ADB: What kind of Magician appeals to you personally?

DG: I really like Magicians that are original. I don't mean just original effects. I mean an original way of presenting them or better yet taking an old effect and giving it a new face. I like Magicians that can think. I like Magicians that dream about doing the impossible. I like Magicians that think and think. I like to influence Magicians in thinking in an original way.

ADB: One of your past 'students' is a world famous Magician today. He credits you with influencing him. Care to share some of this with us?

DG: You mean Rudy Coby. Well, I wouldn't call him a past student. To Carol and I he is more like an adopted son. Rudy is an original thinker. Rudy likes to innovate. I suppose it is because of these qualities it was natural for us to get together. Rudy's magic looks very easy. I can tell you it takes a lot of hard work and discipline. I am proud to say that in a small way I played a part in his success. There are lots of other names I could mention that I shared ideas with and they with me. Magic is about sharing and learning. There are no teachers and students. There is only the meeting of minds that travel the same road. Sometimes those minds have different ideas and opinions but what is wonderful is the fact that innovative minds can get together and discuss the thousands of ways that can make magic better.

ADB: Dan, over the years you must have had many wonderful experiences in Magic. Is there any one that stands out as being the best?

DG: Well, Tony, it is true that I've had a lot of many wonderful experiences. It is really hard for me to say which is the best. However, I can tell you the one that was the most fun and also the scariest. It was many years ago when I was lowered by helicopter onto mid-field during the Gator Bowl football game in Jacksonville, Florida. I then produced a pretty girl from an empty box. Producing the girl from a box in front of thousands of fans was not the hard part. Being lowered down by helicopter well... let's just say I wouldn't want to do that every day!

ADB: You seem happiest when you are doing close-up magic. Is it your favourite kind of magic?

DG: I love all kinds of magic, but I must confess I get a different kind of excitement when I perform close-up magic. I love the interaction. It is a personal interaction with the audience. They can touch and feel things and see things happening. It becomes a personal experience for them. There are lots of very good Magicians who create this same feeling with their audiences when they perform on stage. For me, personally, I get it from close-up.

ADB: Finally Dan, do you have a message or philosophy you would like to share?

DG: I would like to remind all my magical friends that ours is a truly international art. We must remember that magic is about sharing and developing together.

Conclusion

No article on Dan Garrett would be complete without mentioning that he was amongst the elite few chosen to entertain at the White House at the Presidential Inaugural Dinner in January 2001. In 2002, he was chosen alongside other great magical stars to perform on a day of magic on CNN. He was also kept busy with other TV appearances and at many of the major magic conventions, performing and lecturing. In a letter that Carol wrote me she mentioned that Dan also managed that summer to improve his golf game and managed get his handicap down to a single figure for the first time ever!

Over the years, I have several wonderful personal moments that my family and I have shared with Carol and Dan but I cannot conclude my article without briefly sharing one in particular. In July 2000 I was very privileged to have Dan & Carol Garrett at my 53rd birthday lunch.

Together with my son Charles, Dan had secretly organized a surprise birthday lunch for me. Other guests included George & Holly Saterial, Angelo Carbone, Dave Goodsell, Jann Wherry Goodsell, and Bob Torkova. After an enjoyable meal in such wonderful company, Dan rose to his feet and announced, " Good Afternoon, I'm your Birthday Magician". He then proceeded to perform an amazing effect in which the face of a clock, bearing the time I had thought of, appeared drawn on the back of a card with my signature. And if that wasn't enough Dan then gave me the effect as a birthday gift.

Since then, I have had the pleasure of seeing Dan on my trips Stateside and spending time quality time with him and Carol. I am proud and honoured to be able to call Dan Garrett my friend. That's the effect that Dan has on everyone that he meets. It is Dan's greatest magical effect.

NB: *Since this article was written some 10 years ago it has appeared in The Magic Circular and in O Magico. From 2003 to 2006, Dan and I Co-Hosted "World Class Magic" .*

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