

MEET THE ★ CANDIDATES

It is with pleasure and gratitude that we present the following comments from our Member-at-Large candidates for the BDBC Board.

Carolyn Neyman



For me, bridge was a passion from the start, going way back to my college days at The University of South Carolina. (Don't get me started on college football!) After moving to Birmingham for a job as a claims authorizer for the Social Security Administration, bridge soon became the center of my social life, and I was fortunate to begin the journey I am still on now, of learning and loving the game of bridge. My children grew up listening to bridge hands at the breakfast table. (One went to Auburn and the other to Alabama, so I was able to spread my football risk.)

Fast forward to today, years after my retirement from SSA as the head of operations for Birmingham's program center, when I am diamond life master and proud to play bridge at a high level after all these years.

I'm also proud to have served on the board of the BDBC several times, including currently. I believe that the future of duplicate bridge in this city is bright, and as a senior-level player, I am anxious for the next generation of players to grow in their knowledge of the game, make fast friends, and enjoy a lifetime hobby that enriches one's mind and social life. **Bridge has truly made an impact on me, and I hope to pay that impact forward as a member of the board in the coming year. Thanks for considering my candidacy once again.**

Patty Phillips



I was elected to the Board of Directors a year ago. **It has been a great learning experience of what it takes to make our club successful.** I've enjoyed being part of that and hope to continue. As a member of the Board, I am also serving on the Marketing and Education Committees. These two committees have some great plans for the future to grow our club and to appeal to a younger group of players. **I would appreciate your vote so I can help to implement these plans and make sure our club remains one of the best.**

Jill Salmon



I grew up in New Orleans watching my parents enjoy playing bridge with friends. However, I had never played a hand of bridge until about 15 or so years ago. I noticed a sign offering several free bridge lessons. At that time, I enjoyed playing tennis but my knee didn't enjoy it as much as I. **I rounded up 3 friends, went to "Bonnie and Clyde's" Easy Bridge class and my love for the game was born.** My mother played duplicate bridge. I remember her coming home from games wanting to discuss various hands, who held which cards and the bids made. Of course she could have been speaking Swahili as far as I was concerned. Oh how I wish I could call her now and discuss some of the crazy hands we play at the BDBC! **I am so**

grateful for the many friends I have made at the club and look forward to playing, and learning, for many more years.

When I'm not playing bridge, I enjoy spoiling my 4 amazing granddaughters!

Janet Williams



I am a Birmingham native, graduated from Auburn and retired from Bellsouth. After my marriage to Jerry, we settled in Mobile where we raised two children. We returned to Birmingham in 2001 to be closer to our daughter and grandchildren who live in Pelham.

I began playing bridge in college. I remember rushing back to the dorm during a break from classes to play bridge. I thought I knew a lot until I started playing at our club in 2013. Boy, was there a lot to learn. **This club has meant so much to me. I would love to see it**

thriving like it was pre-Covid. I will do what I can to see that happen.

Jean Dent



My bridge interest began by watching how much my mother and grandmother enjoyed playing. I tried bridge my freshman year at Vanderbilt but quickly realized I needed to postpone bridge in the best interest of academics. The postponement continued for 35 years raising three children and working at Bellsouth/AT&T. **I took Jeanne Wamack's class four years ago and quickly fell in love with duplicate bridge!** I love the game and especially enjoy making new friends and renewing friendships from my Bellsouth days. **We**

have a great club with wonderful, patient directors and experienced players who share their time and expertise to help others grow. The Mentor-Mentee program is a wonderful benefit for learning as well as getting to know those at different levels of play. When not playing bridge, I enjoy photography, reading and playing with

grandchildren.

As a member of the board I'd work hard to expand our membership with new members. I also see a need to reach out with creative events to draw inactive members back into the group. This club is giving me many hours of enjoyment and (occasionally) accomplishment. Sharing that with others would be a joy.

Helen Pardue



I am a Birmingham native and a graduate of Samford. My husband Richard and I share the joys of 2 children and 6 grandchildren. Like many of us, I learned to play bridge in college, then life intervened with family. I returned to the game much more recently. In addition to bridge, I enjoy traveling and sewing heirloom clothes for my grandchildren. **I do have experience both serving on and as President of boards for different organizations: the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB, Junior League of Birmingham, the Pickwick Dance Club and Community Bible**

Study.

I have loved making good friends as a result of playing bridge at BDBC. I am very interested in the continued success of this club in the years to come and would be happy to lend my efforts to support that shared goal.

Judy Webb



My love of bridge began "just a few short years ago" at age 11 when my parents and aunt needed a fourth at a moments notice. Their lessons are the only ones I've ever had. I played bridge off and on over the years until I found duplicate bridge when I retired from teaching. From duplicate I have learned many conventions I now play and wonder how I did without them in bidding and understanding this wonderful game we love.

Duplicate bridge has brought me much pleasure, joy and many friendships and I look forward to seeing them at the bridge tables. **I currently am the Care/Concern person for BDBC and am happy to serve our club in that capacity and other areas as needed**

Robert Burr



I learned bridge in many ways by soaking up how others played. When I was young, my parents were members of a social supper/bridge club and allowed me to sit and watch how bridge was bid and played. That sparked my interest, and when I went to college, there was always a bridge game that could be entered and exited at any time in the common area at Auburn in Haley Center. You could play as little or as long as you wanted, with many different partners. After Auburn, I continued to play social bridge during lunch break and with several groups at different country clubs for over twenty years. **Finally, I found BDBC, joined the ACBL and began playing duplicate bridge.** I have not met finer people anywhere than those that play at our Birmingham club. I have been able to play with some of the most advanced members of the club, and I have learned a lot from being able to play with the best. For professional background, I am an Auburn graduate. I have worked for NASA, Liberty National, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield. I retired from Blue Cross and Blue Shield in 2009 with over 30 years of service. My main expertise is in System Development and Information System Management, developing projects for National Accounts, Payroll, Personnel, Employee Benefits, Accounting, Claims, Underwriting, and Legal. **Thanks for the opportunity to serve. If elected, I will work with others to advance the Birmingham club and ACBL goals.**

Cindy Bibb



My bridge journey began a little over 10 years ago when a friend told me she thought I would be good at it. Hahaha! I took a beginning bridge lesson at the old Vestavia location. I knew **NOTHING** about bridge. I couldn't even count points! Very quickly it became obvious that everyone else in the class had some past bridge experience—either in college, as newlyweds, or party bridge. I couldn't even understand the questions that were being asked, much less the answers! I almost quit after the first lesson but I am now glad I didn't. My progress has still been slow—I **have calculated it will take me approximately 20 years to have enough points for my Life Master!!**

I don't play for the points (okay, that's a lie) but I mainly love the puzzle that bridge is both in the bidding and the subsequent play. **My hope is that our club can**

return to its pre-Covid vigor, either by finding new players or convincing our old players that they want to return.

Grace Gwin



I was born in New Iberia, La. and made my way to Birmingham via my years in Tuscaloosa at the University of Alabama. **I was there during the years that guy with the houndstooth hat was there and we won 3 National Titles in my 4 years.** I spent most of my working career in finance splitting my time equally between Merrill Lynch and Sterne Agee.

I retired in 2013 and found my way to BDBC in 2015. I had learned bridge in college but hadn't played in years. **Boy, had the game changed!** Gorham bridge was gone, replaced by Standard American and now Two Over One. I love the game as much today as I did when I learned it and I think we are fortunate to have such an outstanding club with so many amazing players. In addition to duplicate bridge, I also enjoy bird watching, jigsaw puzzles, reading and crossword puzzles. **This club has given me so much. If elected to the board, it'll give me an opportunity to give back.**
