



David Price  
1910 - 1998

David Price  
Dec 15 1910 - Jul 30 1998  
AAFA# 0168

DAVE PRICE  
4102 Idaho Ave  
Nashville TN 37209-3620  
(615) 297-7418

Dear Mr Alford:

Aug 22, 1998

My mother asked me to write and be sure you knew that my dad died July 30.

We put him in the hospital July 5 and by the 15th the Dr said he would never get better, that we may as well put him in a nursing home and "keep him comfortable," which of course means wait for the inevitable.

His initial diagnosis was "mini" strokes, then over-medication for his arthritis. They cut back on his dosage and he then went into withdrawal- not a pretty sight- so they then increased his medicine again but he than started getting pneumonia in two places. They fought that but at some point his various systems just started breaking down due to (among other things) his nearly 88 years. The last week he was just barely conscious and on a Demerol pump for pain management. I think probably the only thing he understood toward the last was when we'd raise him to take a few spoonfulls of water he would open his mouth and look at me and then swallow- but just a few times then he wouldn't "open up" any more. On Wednesday the 29th his kidneys stopped functioning so it was obviously just a matter of time, and not much of that.

They called me at 1:15 a m the following morning and my wife and I went right over; he'd been gone about 15 minutes.

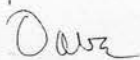
He had told my mother that he wanted a private service at the Veterans' Cemetery. We had visitation Sunday with a closed flag-draped casket, and the funeral on Monday Aug 3rd.

My dad's sister, who lives in the Florida keys, was at Mayo Clinic in Rochester and was unable to get here until Saturday afternoon- hence the delay.

Mother asked that I enclose this story, which was in our local paper the following day. It tells about his interest in magic but says nothing about the genealogical work that occupied much of his last twenty-five or so years. He didn't get started on this until well after he had retired. Once he started he loved it, as you are aware.

Had he not started looking into family connections he would have missed making friends like you. He enjoyed his correspondence with you very much..

All our best regards,



Dave Price (3rd)

# Wave a wand, and recall a man who revered magic

By FRANK RITTER

**A**BOUT six months ago, a teen-age friend of mine confided that he was interested in becoming a magician, and asked my advice.

I told him, "First, we start with David Price." Then we drove out to Old Hickory Boulevard, just off Hillsboro Road, to David's house — and visited in David's home what is perhaps the greatest museum of magic and magicians in the United States, if not the world.

David, 87, confined to a wheelchair because of injuries to his feet from World War II, was a gracious host. He knew everything there is about magicians — from Houdini to David Copperfield, who has made several visits to the private museum.

Copperfield once asked if he could buy the museum, which is priceless. Or if he could inherit it when David died. David, such a gentle, soft-spoken man with a great sense of humor, replied with a chuckle, "No, I think it will go to my son, David Jr."

David Jr., of Nashville, now has the museum, because his father died early yesterday morning. Visitation with the family will be from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday at Roesch-Patton Funeral Home, 1715 Broadway. The burial service will be private.

Private funeral services! I guess that's because David Price, a retired auditor for the Internal Revenue Service, was a private person. He didn't go looking for attention. You had to draw him out — but, oh, when you drew him out, the

stories he could tell!

Stories about magic, which David fell in love with at age 6 when he came across a preacher who got youngsters into church by doing magic tricks. By the time David was 18, he was appearing before civic clubs and small-town audiences.

David's favorite magician of all time was Alexander Herrmann, who played the Egyptian Hall in London — which is why David called his own museum "The Egyptian Hall."

"Herrmann would go around and hand someone an object," David told me, "and it would turn into a snake. Reporters followed him around. He would go to a market and buy eggs. When he cracked them open, there would be coins inside."

"Another of his stunts was to get himself arrested. The officer would bring him in. Of course, when he was searched, he didn't have the stolen object. The officer would have it in his pocket."

"Once Herrmann was on a yacht with a king. He surprised everybody by throwing the king's watch overboard. Then he threw a fishing line overboard, caught a fish and cut open the fish. The king's watch was inside."

David went to war with the U.S. Army in the 1940s and served in both Europe and the Pacific. He walked a lot with a backpack, and when he came out of the war, his feet were in such bad shape that he could never walk again.

He came home to his wife, Virginia, whom he had met on a blind date in Nashville and mar-



In this 1979 photo, David Price shows off some of his memorabilia on magic.

ried June 19, 1934. Virginia is herself quite a character, well-known in Nashville's political circles because she is a self-professed "yellow dog Democrat."

"Yellow-dog Democrat" means that you would vote for a yellow dog before you would consider voting for a Republican. That's how passionate Virginia is about her politics.

David was never that way. His interests were in other things. Magic!

Walking into David's museum is an experience of a lifetime. Look at it: There are magic wands. Magic

cards. A pair of handcuffs used by Houdini. Thousands of posters advertising magic shows.

David would tell you all about Horace Goldin, who came to Nashville from Poland. Goldin perfected the trick of sawing a person in half.

In one appearance, Goldin had the girl he was to saw in half insured for \$100,000. Just before he began to saw, the insurance agent rushed on the stage and cancelled the policy!

David would laugh and slap his leg when he told that story.

In the museum, there are clip-

pings describing the death of great magician Lafayette Burdett, who died trying to saw horses during a theater performance in Scotland, May 8, 1911. Lafayette was buried with his dog, which he had given to Houdini when both of them were in Nashville.

You never knew before, did you, that Houdini once visited Nashville? David could have told you that! ■

(Ritter is a columnist and editor in Nashville.)

*Handwritten note: Max Miller, Tennessee; July 31, 1998*

**David L. Price Jr., 87, 1954 Old Hickory Blvd., Brentwood, a certified public accountant for the Internal Revenue Service, died yesterday Mariner Health Care. Cause not disclosed. Private graveside services 11 a.m. Monday, Middle Tennessee State Veterans Cemetery. Roesch Patton Austin Braacey & Charlton in charge. Survivors: wife, Virginia Price; son, David Price III, Nashville; sister, Martha Kuleg, Florida.**

David Price 0168  
 b. Dec 15 1910 & d. Jul 30 1998  
 Lived in Brentwood, TN  
 Family OWE785NC/JAM687VA  
 Attended 0 meeting(s).  
 Dave was one of the most informed members regarding Alford genealogy. He provided tremendous support to the association especially in the area of genealogical data. He was a member of the AAFA Hall of Fame.

## In Remembrance of AAFA Members

DAVID L. PRICE, JR.  
1910–1998  
AAFA #168  
JAC784NC/JAM687VA



David Price had a long association with AAFA. He was inducted into the Alford Hall of Fame in 1995 for his contributions to Alford genealogy and his support of AAFA. We published an article about his life and his contributions to the world of magic in "David Price, Jr., AAFA Hall of Famer," *AAFA ACTION* Summer 1996, pp. 39–40.

Dave's great-grandparents were Artemus Salathiel Alford (Jacob<sup>5</sup>, William<sup>4</sup>, Lodwick<sup>3</sup>, James<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>), born 1822 GA, and Susan Amanda Cooper, born 1837 GA. Dave compiled a large amount of data on his family and Alford ancestors that he generously shared with AAFA. We began publishing it in "David Price's Alford Genealogy," *AAFA ACTION* Summer 1997, pp. 53–56, and we hope to continue with that effort as soon as we can enlist someone to type it for publication.

David Price III wrote to Gil Alford on

22 August 1998 to let AAFA know that his father had died. He enclosed the articles printed here. About the feature article, he said, "It tells about his interest in magic but says nothing about the genealogical work that occupied much of his last twenty-five or so years. He didn't get started on this until well after he had retired. Once he started he loved it, as you are aware. Had he not started looking into family connections he would have missed making friends like you."

We will miss Dave.

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NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN  
Nashville, TN—31 July 1998

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*In another article, same source:*

Wave a Wand and Recall a  
Man Who Revered Magic  
By Frank Ritter

About six months ago, a teen-age friend of mine confided that he was interested in becoming a magician, and asked my advice.

I told him, "First we start with David Price." Then we drove out to Old Hickory Boulevard, just off Hillsboro Road, to David's house and visited in David's home what is perhaps the greatest museum of magic and magicians in the United States, if

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In the museum, there are clippings describing the death of the great magician Lafayette, who burned to death trying to save his horses during a theater fire in Scotland, May 8, 1911. Lafayette was buried with his dog, which had died a week earlier. He loved the dog, which had been given to him by Houdini when both of them were once in Nashville.

You never knew before, did you, that Houdini once visited Nashville? David could have told you that!

## ALFORD GENEALOGY

By David Price, Jr. - January 1994

I am sure that my Alford line originated in England although I have been unable to so connect it. Reference Schedule I of this genealogy. I have used many sources for compiling this genealogy: the Boddie books, correspondence with many closely related to my mother Bertha Mae Alford; Gil Alford's "About Alford," a newsletter type of publication which led to the organization of The Alford American Family Association in 1987; Ron Head, whose research in Montgomery AL has discombobulated descendents of William Alford Jr and/or Wilkins Alford who are not sure which is their ancestor at the same time adding much solid data on the Alford's in Alabama and who discovered the unmistakable evidence that Jacob Alford is the link between my William SR and my Artemus Salathiel Alford; AAFA ACTION, a quarterly publication that more or less grew out of Gil Alford's publication; and census records, wills, and every other source that I could find.

There has been a doubt cast as to the relationship between my William Sr. and Lodwick Alford. The New Kent VA birth records indicate that William was born in 1734 which would make him 91 when he died instead of 84 as shown by the newspaper obituary. I don't consider a seven year difference a hindrance since the accuracy of records between 1734 and 1825 is such that many consider such minor difference as the equivalent of documentation.

It will be noted that the long list of Lodwick's children includes more than one case of children having the same name. The custom of naming a child after a recently deceased child is well established although that cannot account for all of Lodwick's children. DAR records long showed Lodwick as dying in Georgia in 1789 whereas a reputed will puts his death in North Carolina in 1794. For several years, some researchers have considered the

DAR records unreliable in this regard; however, Lodwick H. Alford, a descendent of James Lodwick (Lotwic), schedules 4 and 24, has recently discovered information which seems to place Lodwick Sr. back in Georgia. It should be noted that Lodwick H. Alford [AAFA #11] contends that James Lodwick is actually a son of James Jr. (schedule 3 b 1713). I do not claim that my placement of James Lodwick is the final answer to this problem.

With various descendents claiming differences as the one noted above, it would be arrogant to claim that this genealogy is correct in each and every case; however, I believe that it can reasonably be stated that this Alford genealogy is substantially correct. There are no genealogies that are not subject to correction upon disclosure of new evidence.

Reference is often made to the attitude of Southerners regarding the Civil War and their ancestors taking part in that war. My mother was an exception in not knowing that any of her ancestors were in the Civil War until I discovered that her grandfather Artemus S. Alford enlisted in the Confederate Army on November 3, 1964, at Sparta, Alabama. It may be noted that my Price grandfather was a soldier in the opposing army.

The size of this genealogy attests to the prolificacy of the line which has grown exponentially beginning with John who patented land in New Kent Co VA in 1682. In addition to those enumerated herein, I have compiled dozens of Alford's who appear to be descended from John but with respect to whom I cannot determine the exact connection.

Printed in Summer 1997 AAFA ACTION

# David Price, Jr., AAFA Hall of Famer

David Price, Jr., AAFA #168, was inducted into the Alford Hall of Fame at the 1995 Annual Meeting in Decatur, AL. We're proud to have David as a member, and we thank him for his contributions and support over the years.

Dave has written some genealogical works pertaining to Alford that he is allowing us to share with you—we'll be printing some of his work in future issues. Dave's interest in genealogy is exceeded only by his lifelong love of magic. An article honoring his contributions to the "world of magic" and filling in the details of Dave's life follows the Proclamation.

## Proclamation

Whereas, the Alford American Family Association was formed in 1987 for the following broad purposes:

1. To collect, record, preserve, disseminate, and perpetuate biographical data and historical information on Alford and their ancestors.
2. To educate members, particularly those of the younger generations on Alford family history and how it related to the history of our nation.
3. To further fellowship and camaraderie within the living Alford family.

and,

Whereas, the Board of Directors of the Alford American Family Association are desirous of recognizing those individuals of the organization who have contributed greatly and significantly to the furtherance of these broad purposes, and,

Whereas, Mr. David Price of Brentwood, Tennessee was an early and active participant in the aforesaid purposes, and,

Whereas, Mr. Price was of great assistance in the formative years of the Association in establishing and setting the highest standards of research in Alford genealogy, and,

Whereas, his firm insistence on thoroughness of research, meticulous and accurate recording of Alford data and

citation of the sources of such data wherever possible, have been a model for all members of the Association to follow, and,

Whereas, Mr. Price has faithfully followed these principles in researching his Alford ancestors, has recorded, assembled in admirable form his Alford research and presented it to the Association, and,

Whereas, his efforts have contributed greatly and significantly to the purposes of the Association, and,

Whereas, for these accomplishments Mr. David Price is recognized and by the direction of the Board of Directors is hereby inducted into the Alford American Family Association Hall of Fame.

The assistance of Mr. David Price in the early years of the Alford American Family Association are in keeping with the highest and finest traditions of the ancient, proud, honorable and illustrious name of Alford.

I, therefore, set my hand and seal this lath day of October in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Five.

Benjamin F. Alford, Jr., President

From *The Linking Ring*, undated

I.B.M. members should know David Price, Jr. from his marvelous, 550 page book *MAGIC, A Pictorial History of Conjurers in the Theater* (1985), and as collector, curator, and caretaker of David Price's Egyptian Hall Museum of Magic in Brentwood, Tennessee, a suburb of Nashville. Order of Merlin members who attended the 1987 Nashville convention will remember his informative talk at the Merlin Breakfast, while spouses who attended the Spouses Coffee will remember Virginia Price's talk about indigenous birds and her caring of them. (Mrs. Price founded The Amelia Laskey Memorial Wildlife Refuge, a tax-exempt sanctuary named for Nashville's most famous woman ornithologist. Mrs. Price was well-known for her "bird hospital" where, until recently, she treated sick and injured birds. She was featured in Ripley's

"Believe It Or not" for her bird caretaking.)

Price was born December 15, 1910 in St. Louis, Missouri. At six-years-of-age, young David saw a magic performance by a preacher who used magic as a way to get youngsters into church. As with many of us, once "bitten," the "bug" never left him.

David's father traveled and David was educated in Missouri, Illinois, and Tennessee. He got into magic seriously in high school, and by eighteen, David was appearing before civic clubs and smalltown audiences under the stage name of "de Livingston, the Master Mystifier." Price says, "I was what is known as a 40miler. I played within a 100-mile radius of Nashville."

In 1929, David joined the I.B.M. and it is a source of pride that his membership card is signed by W.W. Durbin.

"Unfortunately," he says, "during the depression years I technically dropped out of the organization. Those were tough times, and we cut cards to determine who would retain membership. Throughout my period of non-membership, I continued to receive the magazine and have a complete file on my library shelves. I have since worked my way back to membership in the Order of Merlin; but, my age will prevent my attainment of the higher plateau."

From 1929 through 1944, Price worked schools, clubs and theaters professionally. In 1934, he married Virginia Lane, to whom he was introduced by Paul McWilliams, a great magic friend and a professional magician for some forty years. Virginia half seriously says, "he married me because he needed an assistant."

However, the war cut short his professional career and David served in the European and Pacific theatres of war during World War II. Upon discharge, war injuries to his feet (broken arches) prevented him from continuing his career in show business. He went to work in a bank and his experience there in accounting and his military service won him permission to take the Certified Public Accountant exam. He passed and went on to become an officer of the

Internal Revenue Service from 1947 through 1964.

During this period, he sought and received permission from the IRS to teach courses in taxes at the University of Tennessee in Nashville. At this same time (1949-1963) Estes Kefauver was one of the two U.S. Senators from Tennessee, and Virginia Price worked for the Senator as a field representative.

Although he could no longer perform after the war, David's interest in magic still remained strong. In 1954, he struck a deal with Tom Dowd, Ohio attorney and farmer, to purchase the memorabilia in W.W. Durbin's Egyptian Hall Theatre which Tom had purchased in 1940. This

collection of posters and photographs of magicians became the start of the Price Museum.

The museum is private and noncommercial, its only purpose being to collect, preserve and display the mementoes of magicians. It has now grown "a thousand fold," David says, but the W.W. Durbin collection was its start and the source of its name. "I designed this house and museum," says Price, "there are no windows (in the museum room) so light won't fade the posters...." The museum contains ceiling height antique posters, a lifelike head used in a decapitation illusion, and an eight-foot tall "scrapbook" or poster-display rack attached to the wall

by hinges. One "page" has a display of over 75 wands used by magicians....

David Price, Jr. is now 84 years young. For the past ten years he has been confined to a wheel chair due the worsening of his feet from his WWII injuries. This has not slowed down his enthusiasm for magic, his collecting, nor (we hope) his writing about magic and magicians. The entire world of magic owes him a debt of gratitude for preserving the posters, photos, apparatus, letters, and other magicians' memorabilia in his collection for the enjoyment and study of current and future generations....

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