

BROKEN WAND CEREMONY

by Bruce Chadwick MA, M.Div.

In loving remembrance of _____, we the fellow illusionists of the Texas Association of Magicians, the Society of American Magicians, and the International Brotherhood of Magicians humbly participate in this service. We perform a tribute today that we call the broken wand ceremony.

My name is _____ and today I represent the magicians, illusionists, and sleight-of-hand artists everywhere who knew _____, as well as the hundreds of people young and old who were delighted when he used his whimsical sense of humor to present his unique illusion effects.

To us as magicians, magic is the world of illusions, sleight-of-hand, and legerdemain. It is the art of using intriguing puzzles and theatrical effects to entertain, mystify, and delight our audiences. It is the world of sawing ladies in half, making them seemingly float in the air, and yes even pulling rabbits out of our hats.

As magicians and illusionists, we are a brotherhood. We have a unique and uncanny bond that is hard to describe with words. Our childlike fascination with illusions is akin to a child opening his birthday presents. Our mutual interest in magic pulls us together perhaps unlike any other profession or hobby. We are always eager to show each other the latest card trick.

You might even find a millionaire and a pauper sitting on the living room floor digging through a cardboard box of magic puzzles, giddy like they are long-lost brothers. Our common interest in magic is a great equalizer that transcends age, culture, education, and socioeconomic status. Put two magicians in the same room who have never met and within minutes they will have a unique bond that can only be described as a brotherhood.

From the beginning of time, symbols have used to represent various nations, businesses, and groups. We of the United States use the image of the Bald Eagle to represent our country. The fireman's helmet is a symbol of firefighters everywhere. All of us can picture the barber pole and we know that's the place to go to get our hair

trimmed. The ancient symbol of physicians worldwide is the “caduceus (cad-ah-cuss) staff, you know the picture of the staff with the two snakes intertwining around it.

To the magician, the magic wand is our symbol. In reality it is nothing more than a simple stick, painted black with white tipped ends. It is nothing more than a theatrical prop used during the performance of entertainment. And yet unlike what Harry Potter may lead you to believe, it has no “magic powers.”

Never-the-less when the wand is used during a magician’s performance, it comes to life by intriguing the eye, mystifying the mind, and moving people into awe and laughter. Our craft deepens with the use of this simple symbol.

So please understand that what we do today is something we consider very somber and real. We acknowledge that without a master to wield his wand, it ceases to have its strength and power. That is the case today. Magicians have lost a brother with the passing of _____, and today we break this wand as yet another symbol, a symbol of his passing.

_____ has now done a feat that we who are alive have not done. He has moved over into another realm, a dimension of existence that only one who has moved from life into death can experience. He has passed over into mysteries that only he can know. _____, we will miss you, and your friendship and the joy you brought to so many will be missed as well. On behalf of us all, we honor you this day. (break wand, give broken pieces to deceased member’s family).