



**George Mittelman,  
Fred's partner  
for several  
international  
successes**

### Influences and Lessons

Geoff Hampson and I started playing together when we were very young, and competed as juniors for Canada. We both had plenty of talent but lacked knowledge. Geoff and I were forced to figure out lots of things on our own, and I am certain that this process benefited us both in our respective careers. Eric Kokish has taught me a great deal about the technical side of bridge, about scientific bidding, and about the importance of being a good partner and teammate. Edgar Kaplan and Jeff Rubens, through their writing in *The Bridge World* (and through Edgar's personal interest in my development), also had a major impact on the way I think about the game.

From Joey Silver, I learned that science is not necessary for effective bidding, but that having the right mental attitude towards winning is crucial for success. Joey Silver was my first serious partner, and he did more for my game than anyone. I was very scientific when I first started playing with Joey — every bid had to be well defined. Joey soon cured me of that by simply refusing to discuss system at all! We played an 11-14 notrump, five-card majors, two-way Stayman, and Blackwood (although Joey never used it). I was very frightened when we started playing together, as I did not think it was possible to play effectively without good methods. Joey taught me that system was highly overrated and that winning at bridge was much more a function of good judgement, good card play, and a good attitude.

George Mittelman's tremendous talent and experience has had a very positive impact on all parts of my game, but particularly on the partnership aspects. George is a great defender, and our basic approach to signaling was, 'tell partner what he needs to know.' We did not try to define a whole range of specific