



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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ACTUARIES ON THEIR OWN TIME

MAN OF MANY ROLES

RAY MARTIN started performing in the theater when the director of a play his children were performing in told him that a nearby summer outdoor theater offered opportunities to all ages. “I auditioned in 2000 and was cast as Mr. Sowerberry in *Oliver!*” Martin says.

Thirteen years later, he has performed with more than six different local theater groups, participating in more than 25 productions. Martin states he has “done the same production in different roles a few times. One of my favorite roles was Jud Fry in *Oklahoma!* Because of my love for singing, any role with a solo is on the top of my list.”

When asked what is the toughest part of being on stage, Martin says, “Getting the lines right. Often you go on stage and your head goes blank. I must always be thinking of my next scene and my dialogue or song.”



Ray Martin in one of his many roles.

What does he like best about performing in the theater? “First, being able to sing great music, then the camaraderie, the strange unexpected things that happen in rehearsals and performances, lastly taking that final bow knowing you did your best.”

Martin sees an actuarial tie-in to performing in the theater. “For me it is the discipline that is needed for both along with keeping one’s mind active and innovative.” **A**

F. Ray Martin, FSA, MAAA, is a consultant with MarACon, LLC. He can be contacted at Ray.Martin@MarAConLLC.com.

A DISCERNING EYE

After attending the world ice skating competition in 2007, **JENNIFER GILLESPIE** was encouraged by several friends and coaches at her local ice skating rink to take up judging figure skating competitions. For the past five years, she’s been watching spins, jumps and steps with a discerning eye.

Gillespie says she judges “about one competition per month. Summer is actually the busiest time. I have judged people who have skated at Nationals, but not anybody whose name would be recognized ... yet!”

What does she like best about being a figure skating competition judge? “I like to watch skating at all levels of skill. It is fun to watch



Jennifer Gillespie (center) judging a skater.

somebody have a personal best—no matter what level they’re at. I like learning the intricacies of a sport I enjoy,” states Gillespie.

When asked if she ever figure skated competitively, Gillespie says, “I’ve always been a big fan of figure skating and I grew up pond skating in Minnesota, but I didn’t really start taking lessons until I was about 30. I have skated in a few competitions, but as I always remind people—I skate because I love it, not because I’m good at it!”

For Gillespie the actuarial tie-in to judging figure skating competitions is that “actuaries have to make decisions with the information available—whether or not it’s enough for a clear answer. That’s the same thing in judging—you use all the information a skater just presented to you in their performance and you make the best decision you can.” **A**

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THE MIGHTY PEN

J.D. DAVIS is the author of a book titled *Unconquered*, a biography of cousins Jerry Lee Lewis, Jimmy Swaggart and Mickey Gilley, born within a 12-month span in small-town Louisiana during the Great Depression. The book draws from exhaustive research and personal connections with friends and family.

When asked what inspired him to write the book, Davis says, “After reading extensively about these men, visiting their hometown, and getting to know their family members, I realized there was a fascinating story to be told. My interest in undertaking the daunting task of writing a biography that would require weaving together the lives of three men developed from my interest in the men themselves. While much had been written about them—particularly about Jerry Lee Lewis—I found, to my surprise, no one had ever integrated their three lives together. The way their stories interlock really is the compelling story, in my opinion, and I feel privileged to have been able to tell it.”

“The research, writing and publishing of this book took roughly three years. I spent roughly 5,000 hours on it, the most significant of which was the research phase,” Davis says when asked how many hours of research he did for the book and what that research entailed. “Research efforts took me around the country—from places as diverse as New York City and Ferriday, La.—and included Memphis, Baton Rouge, Houston, Branson, Nashville, and the list goes on. I have met and spoken to hundreds of people. The fascinating group of friends and family—including some notable personalities of

music and 20th century culture—provided a mountain of information from which to craft the story found in *Unconquered*.”

“As a first-time author, I learned an enormous amount writing this book. Perhaps most importantly, I learned about the rigorous process of writing a book from start to finish. It is an extensive process, to say the least, and being thorough and organized during each step of the process is crucial,” Davis says when asked if he learned anything from writing the book and, if so, what.

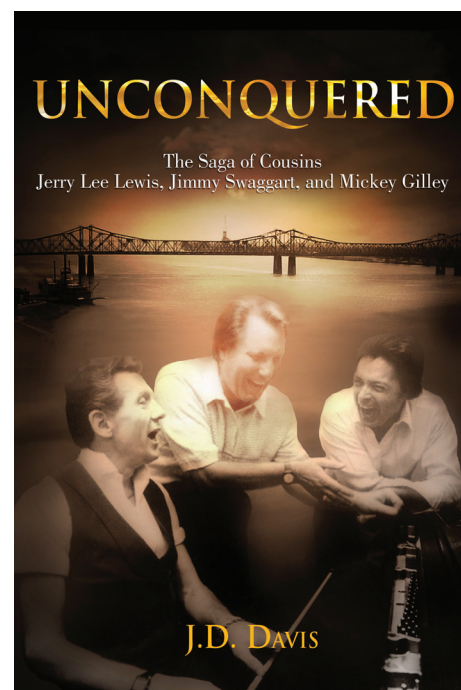
A project the size of writing a book does not come without difficulties. “The biggest challenge in writing *Unconquered* was creating a book that would be appealing, yet credible, to vastly different audiences. In writing about Jerry Lee Lewis, Jimmy Swaggart and Mickey Gilley, I wanted to write a book that appealed to the rock ‘n’ roll, country and gospel music audiences; to secular and religious audiences; and to academic and non-academic audiences. It required striking a careful and unusual balance,” Davis says.

Does he have plans for other future books? Davis states, “I picked up this topic because it was one I found interesting and felt was compelling to a potentially broad audience. Future book efforts would depend largely on the ability to continue finding topics upon which I am interested and about which I think I am qualified (maybe even uniquely qualified) to write.”

Davis describes the actuarial tie-in to authoring a book this way: “While the creative process of writing a book calls upon a vastly different skill set than that



J.D. Davis is the author of *Unconquered*.



often utilized by an actuary, I found the analytical and organizational skills developed in my professional career a great help during the research and organization phase, which many consider the most difficult as well as crucial to the process of authoring a work. **A**

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