

Bill Gates

As a child, Bill Gates learned bridge from his parents. However, he got addicted to bridge through Warren Buffett in the late 1990s; the two now play regularly on OKbridge and in ACBL tournaments. Gates has a reputation as an enthusiastic learner, studying and playing with professionals like Fred Gitelman to refine his game. He has also been tutored by Sharon Osberg, who is a 2-time world champion and Warren Buffett's regular bridge partner.

In 2005, Buffett, Gates and Osberg launched a bridge program for public schools. Buffett and Gates donated \$1 million in funding.¹ Unfortunately, the program has ended since then.

Says Gitelman, "Bill does have an unusual thirst for knowledge, even for a bridge player. He genuinely wants to learn as much as he can."²

Notable Quotes

- "Bridge is the king of all card games."³
- "Bridge helps you think. It's a game you can play your entire life and keep getting better and better."⁴
- "[Bridge is] deliciously simple in the rules but deliciously complex in doing well."⁵
- "I like both team and matchpoint [play]. I like matchpoints because there are just two of you playing, so there are slightly fewer variables. You usually get hand records afterwards, and a lot of tables play the same hand, and so you can look at all those different scores and see what happened. And because it's so excruciatingly important to take every trick you can, match point highlights any sloppiness in defensive or declarative play. So it forces you to think, okay, I've got to learn about squeezes, I've got to keep track of the shape of the hands I don't know as the hand goes on, and take full advantage of that."⁶

References

¹ USA Today, December 19, 2005. Billionaires Bank on Bridge to Trump Poker.

² MSN Games, July 31, 2008. Casually Speaking Interview: Fred Gitelman.

³ BridgeUnion.com, March 2010. Interview with Bill Gates.

⁴ ACBL Video. Bill Gates Encourages Young People to Play Bridge.

⁵ CBS News Sunday Morning, February 17, 2008. In the Cards

⁶ TED Talks. What Makes for a Good Bridge Partner.