

Milestones ~ GH's Anthony Geary's 25 Anniversary

Written by Linda Marshall-Smith
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While GH characters may be dispensable, Anthony Geary is not

Geary Treated to A Christmas Carol for Luke

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As portrayed by Anthony Geary, Luke Spencer has been described as the most popular character in soap opera history and on November 25, 2003, during the taping of the General Hospital Christmas-themed episode based on Charles Dicken's A Christmas Carol, Geary celebrated 25 years with the show.

One critic said: "Geary's individualism, uniqueness and awesome range is the most notable in Daytime (television) history," a statement that is typical of the actor's reviews. He added to his laurels by winning the 1981 Emmy Award as Outstanding Actor in a Daytime Drama Series. Anthony brought Luke Spencer back to the viewing audience on October 29, 1993, and received his second and third Emmy Awards for Outstanding Lead Actor in 1999 and 2000. He received his eighth Emmy nomination for Outstanding Lead Actor in May 2003 (he was also nominated in 1980, 1982, 1996 and 1997).

In January 1991 Anthony returned to General Hospital in the role of Bill Eckert, a cousin of Spencer's and a man of many -- often dark -- colors. Anthony was seen on-screen as both Bill Eckert and Luke Spencer as the story progressed, until the death of Eckert.

Geary has come a long way from Coalville, Utah, the small mountain community of 800 where he was born. He was a gifted student, attending the University of Utah as a Presidential Award Scholar in theater. Jack Albertson saw him perform there and cast him in "The Subject Was Roses." The production, starring Albertson and Martha Scott, toured Hawaii and settled at the Huntington Hartford Theater in Los Angeles, where Geary decided to establish himself. His

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ensuing musical theater credits comprise a catalogue of classics. A highlight in this period was his co-starring engagement with Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca at the Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas in "Your Show of Shows."

Geary has performed in more than 50 stage productions throughout the United States. His appearance in the one-man show, "Human Scratchings," performed to sold-out houses in Los Angeles in 1996, earned him unanimous critical acclaim and a DramaLogue Award. His other extensive theatrical credits include roles in productions of "The Wild Duck," "The Inspector General," "The Cat's Paw," "The Glass Menagerie" and "Barabbas" at the Los Angeles Theater Center. In addition he toured with a production of "Jesus Christ Superstar," portraying the title role. He also portrayed Octavius Caesar, opposite Lynn Redgrave and Timothy Dalton, in a production of Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra" for PBS and the BBC.

Geary has made guest appearances on more than 40 television shows. Among his TV credits are roles on "Starky & Hutch," "Barnaby Jones," "The Streets of San Francisco," "The Blue Knight," "All in the Family," "The Six Million Dollar Man," "The Partridge Family," "Most Wanted," "Mannix," "The Mod Squad," "Room 222," "Doc Elliot," "Temperatures Rising," "Marcus Welby, M.D.," "Hotel" and "Murder, She Wrote." He also performed in the television movies "Perry Mason and the Case of the Murdered Madam," "Kicks," "Sins of the Past," "The Imposter," "Intimate Agony" and "Do You Know the Muffin Man?," and in the Daytime dramas "Bright Promise" and "The Young and the Restless."

But the milestone remains Geary's tenure at General Hospital. Not only has he played a controversial, yet sympathetic character, he is one half of soapdom's most prominent super couple, Luke and Laura (Genie Frances). Most everyone, whether ardent GH fan or not, can remember where they were and what they were doing as Luke and Laura got married. That's called taking soap opera to the mainstream.

In the Christmas episodes that mark Geary's 25th anniversary, Robert Keizer Kelly returns to Port Charles as Stavros Cassadine along with Constance Towers as Helena. What havoc will they cause as Luke is taken to his past, his present and his future? Wait -- is that Marley's Ghost or Stavros' Ghost pictured at left? Either way, will he lead Luke to a new realization of his worth? Find out when you tune in to General Hospital later this month!

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