



Harry Houdini A Halloween Day tribute

Houdini doesn't rise to tribute

By Betty Flynn Our New York Correspondent

NEW YORK — It all happened between the tombstones of the Buchsbaums and the Estrichers at the Machpelah Jewish Cemetery in Queens.

A bust of Ehrich Weiss, known to the world as Harry Houdini, gazed down on a small group of magicians who had gathered on a windswept Halloween Day to mark the 46th anniversary of his death.

"We're not trying to summon Houdini out of his grave," said Edward E. Mishell, a lawyer from Short Hills, N.J., and president of the National Society of American Magicians.

THAT WAS fortunate, as some of the small party of amateur magicians and newsmen were standing on the flat tombstone.

Mishell and his aide, Larry Arcuri, launched into a brief "wand-breaking ceremony," in which a \$1 white-tipped black

magician's wand is cracked in half, symbolizing that the power the magicians exercised through the wand is now dissipated.

The ceremony, according to Mishell, was first performed in 1926 when Houdini was buried and is traditionally observed at magicians' funerals.

Someone recalled the story that Houdini was buried with a telephone so he could make contact with this world after passing to the next. Another said he had promised to contact his renowned colleague, Harry Blackstone.

"WELL, HE NEVER did," Mishell said with a smile. "I guess there was a communications gap."

"Good-by, Harry, see you next year," Arcuri called as the chartered bus pulled away from the cemetery.

"Watch out," came a voice from the back of the bus, "you might get an answer."