

Tricoci University of Beauty Culture
The Beauty Industry Report
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The Beauty Industry Report Visit www.bironline.com

Leo Passage, founder, Pivot Point Intl. (1936-2011)

On May 11, the professional salon industry lost a visionary, innovator, educator, mentor and friend with the passing of **Leo Passage**.

Beauty Industry Report (BIR) shares this tribute to a man who truly made a difference.

Leo came to America from the Netherlands with his young wife of one week and created a network of hairdressing education that nearly 50 years later spans the globe. His career began at the age of 17 when he was sent to apprentice

with a family friend in Holland. He worked there five days a week, and on weekends he returned to Belgium to work in his father's barbershop. Leo's father encouraged him to compete and experiment with his skill. That led to the discovery of Leo's lifelong passion, the world of hairdressing competitions. In time, he won more than 95 competitions. He became an enterprising visionary in the European hairdressing community and soon set his sights on the American scene.

Leo began his road to success as a hairdresser in the United States with a two-year contract at a salon owned by a French expat in Evanston, IL, where he earned \$75.00 a week, \$64.35 after taxes. In just six months, Leo had two full-time assistants who helped him service 50 clients a day. Meanwhile, he taught competition training on the weekends and soon began teaching around the country. He also began teaching for product companies, at association conventions and in hotel ballrooms to packed houses with standing room only. His reputation as original, fresh and innovative grew quickly in the profession and demand for his classes continued to grow.

Building on his success as a hairdresser, competition trainer and educator, Leo opened his first salon in Glenview, IL, and then later in Evanston. Armed with a passion for teaching and his approach to understanding the Bauhaus principles of art applied to hair, school owners also wanted to learn his system of education.

From 1959 through 1962, he continued competing. In 1961, he captured the coveted titles of World Supreme Champion and Hairdresser of the Year at the International Beauty Show in New York City. In 1962, he was the youngest member of the U.S. team in Paris, France. That same year, he opened **Pivot Point Beauty School** on the north side of Chicago with five students in one classroom. As he settled in the greater Chicago area, Leo became actively involved in the **National Cosmetology Association (NCA)** and the **Chicago Cosmetologists' Association (CCA)** in order to serve their members with

ongoing education and the creation of trend collections.

"Leo always provided his brilliant and nurturing guidance and created an environment at Pivot Point where I, and countless others thrived. Leo saw the infinite possibilities, and he instilled this quality in all who were touched by him. I spent 16 years with Leo, many as his international artistic director. The education we received under Leo's tutelage was invaluable—someone would need to go to a four-year college today for this type of education! It was the work that we did during this time that laid the foundation for my latter career as author, writer, teacher and public speaker. A very spiritual and heart-centered man, he was as authentic as they come, and I not only feel tremendous gratitude for his mentorship, but feel so blessed to have been friends. My husband, Jim, and I would enjoy our dinners



Leo Passage

"Leo's passing is the biggest loss in this industry this century. He was truly an icon in education, both as a humanitarian and a professional teacher. I will miss my friend and a professional giver to the industry dearly."
—**Mario Tricoci**, founder and vice chairman of **Tricoci University of Beauty Culture**

known—always sharing with others without self-interest, and possessing a timeless, creative spirit as fresh on the last day as on the first.

Leo is survived by his wife **Lenie**, daughter **Corrine (John Bernin)**, son **Robert (Jaye)**, brother **Frans**, five grandchildren, many relatives and he leaves behind thousands of friends and colleagues around the world.

BIR invited some of Leo's colleagues, students and friends to share their memories.

renowned Mr. Passage. He was always accessible, tirelessly giving of his time and energy. As a student, that had a huge impact on me. Education is a caring and giving business. Your work does more for others than it does for you. Leo embodied that sentiment, and has influenced thousands and thousands of hairdressers all over the globe whose life's work has become their careers. —**David Raccuglia**, founder, **American Crew**