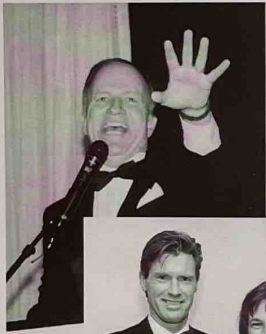




2001

14th Annual
Eastern Tennis
Hall of Fame Dinner

Hall of



Fame 2000



PAUL CRANIS

By Nancy Gill McShea

The next time you feel like letting go of a childhood dream and need a jolt of inspiration to keep at it, just call Paul Cranis. He will share anecdotes with you about his storied tennis career that began in 1952, by chance, when he was 17 and pitching for the Tilden High School baseball team in Brooklyn. He is still chasing the dream almost 50 years later in his position as the director of tennis and the head teaching professional at the Norbeck Country Club in Rockville, Md.

"Paul is like a kid, he's still eager to play and improve his ranking; he loves to compete," said his long-time friend Dick Savitt, the 1951 Wimbledon and Australian singles champion. "He teaches all day and at the drop of a hat he'll play. I do not know anyone who likes tennis more than Paul...Not only has he improved as he's gotten older, he's put a lot back into the game."

His story opens in March of 1952: "...I'm pitching the middle innings for Tilden in a PSAL (Public School Athletic League) game. We win the game and

I'm thinking 'Life could not be better. Maybe a career in baseball. Me and Sandy Koufax. [Both southpaws.]' To get to the baseball field I had to cut through the tennis courts at Lincoln Terrace Park. The teaching pro there, Phil Rubell, would bait me and say, 'Come on you sissy, you can't play this game.' One day in May I decided to try but couldn't get the ball over the net. I became obsessed with the game and played my first PSAL tennis tournament in June. By December I won the boys' 18s title at Eastern's junior indoor championships."

Cranis took some lessons that year with Rubell and started playing regularly at the public parks with Rubell's son, Don. In 1965 when *World Tennis* magazine gave Cranis an award for founding the innovative junior training program, Project Upswing, they ran a piece recalling the boys' passion for tennis: "The two was 4-foot-10 and Paul was 6-foot-4. The don went off to the public courts, looking like Mutt and Jeff... Throughout the winter...they shoveled the snow off the courts and played until there was no more light. They hated to quit and when it got dark they would try to see by the light from a street lamp...Phil Rubell rented an armory on Clinton and Washington Avenue...and put up two courts. There was no baseline because the armory did not have enough room. The highly polished floor was very fast and Paul, from desperation rather than from intuition, learned to hit every ball on the rise."

The following summer Cranis was ranked No. 6 in the East in his only year in the juniors.

"I never saw a baseball again," he said. Except as a spectator, that is. In 1953 he played everyday at the Sterling tennis courts across the street from Ebbs Field, and when he finished at about 4 o'clock he'd go to the side gate of the stadium and sneak in to watch the end of a Dodgers game.

In 1954 Cranis played tennis on scholarship at George Washington University; and after a stint in the U.S. Army, he competed on the amateur international circuit—at Wimbledon, the French, the U.S. Championships and in tournaments in Europe and the Caribbean. When he returned to New York he completed his education at the Institute of Finance and went to work for the Daniel Construction Company, a business specializing in capital construction of chemical manufacturing and commercial facilities. He also worked as a real estate broker specializing in office leasing, but the game remained a top priority.

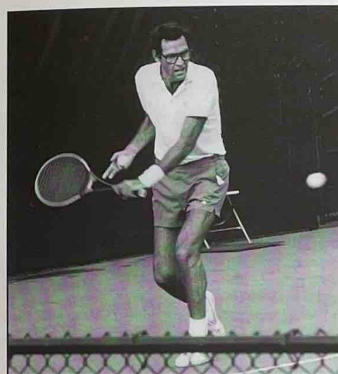
Over the years, he has earned 20 top ten national senior rankings and has been ranked first in Eastern men's singles or doubles in every age category. He has won or been runner-up in 28 USTA national



Paul Cranis (l), Eastern's junior development chairman and founder of the Project Upswing training program for the section's top players, checked out an early 1970s Easter Bowl draw with (l to r) tournament founder Seena Hamilton, Eastern president Eugene Scott and referee Lee Jackson.

championships and captured the gold medal in men's 45 singles and doubles at the Maccabiah Games in Israel. A veteran USTA and Eastern volunteer, he has logged 17 years of service at the helm of national and sectional teams, two terms as Eastern's vice president and 15 years as the section's chairman of junior development.

In June of 1970 Cranis played for the first time in the national 35 clay court championships at the Shel-



Paul Cranis, tournament director from 1975-79 of the U.S. Open Men's 35 Championships, is pictured competing at the 1979 Open.

ter Rock Tennis Club in Manhasset, Long Island, and won his first gold ball by upsetting the top seed and beating King Van Nostrand for the title. "I was obviously sky high," he said. "I'm a power player, a serve-and-volleyer who's constantly at the net. That was my career. To use that strategy on a clay court against King, I had to play really well."

In August of 1970 at the U.S. Open at Forest Hills, he asked tournament director Billy Talbert if they could run a men's 35 event during the Open. Talbert said yes, and you guessed it, in the first year of the tournament Cranis beat both Bill Tully and Bobby Riggs and wound up in the final against Sammy Giammalva.

"That was a good summer, winning my first national tournament on clay and reaching the finals of a national tournament on grass," recalled Cranis, who served for several years as the national director of the U.S. Open Men's 35 Championships.

But he had already solidified his legacy in the East in the '60s by starting Project Upswing, the first group training program for the section's top-ranked juniors. He asked members of the Eastern Tennis Patrons, Alastair Martin and Dan Johnson, to underwrite the program, and they agreed to do it. Luke Sapan, the owner of the Midtown Tennis Club in New York City, donated the courts. George Seewagen was the head coach and Cranis directed the sessions, which ran from 6 to 9 a.m. from October through April.

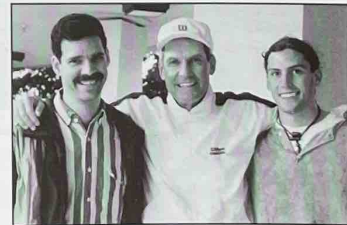
World Tennis magazine publicized the program: "It is 4:30 a.m. on a Saturday morning and the alarm

clock is ringing. Paul Cranis staggers out of bed in his Manhattan apartment because he has to; it was his idea. In 24 other homes around the New York metropolitan area...kids are jumping out of bed...From this group, the official Eastern team will be chosen to play the national junior circuit next summer. Never before has the section sent a full complement of juniors to the nationals. Now everyone capable of getting a national ranking can earn such a trip...Among the stars are Steve Siegel...Dickie Stockton...Jeff Podesta...Mike Fishbach...Eugene Mayer...and Marjorie Gengler."

The *New York Times* publicized the program, too. In the March 13, 1966 issue, a Charles Friedman piece led with a splashy headline: "Project Upswing: It Leads Tennis Hopefuls to Get Up at 4:30..." The group, ranging from 12 to 18 years old, are the top players in their class and have been selected...for Project Upswing, aimed at lifting the section's best juniors to national heights...For years the outstanding juniors in the country generally have come from the South and the West Coast. The present national champion is Bobby Lutz of Los Angeles. His predecessor was Stan Smith of Pasadena...before Smith came Cliff Richey of Dallas."

Cranis was also instrumental in getting Seena Hamilton to found the Easter Bowl in 1968, which is now the largest national junior tournament in the country. "Paul Cranis' Project Upswing was the most progressive program in which a tennis association assumed responsibility for developing its talented children," said Hamilton, the Easter Bowl's tournament director. My son was in the program at Midtown and Paul talked me into running a national tournament there to give Eastern players an opportunity to compete against the best juniors in the country."

It's no wonder that Paul Cranis, who still remembers that enthusiastic 17-year-old from Brooklyn, is linked with a program that helped kids dream.



Paul Cranis visited recently with his sons Peter (l) and Christopher (r).

LEE JACKSON

By Nancy Gill McShea

Lee Jackson insists she doesn't want to be known as den mother for the world's best women professional tennis players, but admits that because she's been around so long she's become a constant presence in their lives. Then she says, "They're all my children. I am very blessed."

Indeed, they literally rolled out the red carpet for Jackson on center court at the 1994 Australian Open. The gesture was part of a luxury trip that was given to her by the pro players, staff members of the women's tour and tournament promoters to applaud her professional dedication to the game.

Peachy Kellmeyer, the senior vice president of operations and player relations for the Sanex WTA Tour, introduced Jackson on that special occasion and repeated those sentiments last week. "Lee has been the backbone of our tour for the greater part of her life and a second mom to so many of us for the greater part of our lives. No one is more special to women's tennis," she said.

"I've done everything in the game but play pro tennis. You name it, I've done it; it's the only thing I've ever done," said Jackson, 76, a native of Yonkers who called her first junior match more than 50 years ago at the Racquet Club on Park Hill in Westchester. "I played tennis myself and when my children Whitney and Leslie started, I became heavily involved in the junior game. I joined the Bronxville Field Club and met the umpire Jack Stahr, who became my mentor. I officiated regularly, and before I knew it I was president of the Eastern Umpires Association, vice president of the Eastern Tennis Association and a ranking chair on the Junior Tennis Council...I also wrote a column, "Ask the Umpire," for *World Tennis* magazine, worked for *Tennis Week* and was a member of the USTA Rules Committee when Jimmy Van Alen established the tie-break."

Jackson began officiating at national and collegiate tournaments and then gained clout as a top-notch umpire and referee by working both men's and women's matches at major professional events, including the U.S. Open at Forest Hills. She witnessed great rivalries among legends such as Ken Rosewall, Rod Laver, Maria Bueno, Billie Jean King, Evonne Goolagong and Margaret Court. "Everything was very casual then and the camaraderie was incredible," she said. "We traveled together, par-tied together, we spent all of our time together."

Jackson joined the women's professional tour as a full-time traveling referee and umpire in January of 1975. She worked the chair for great women's matches through the 1970s and '80s and developed a strong loyalty to the players.

In the semifinals of her first assignment in San Francisco, she survived a baptism of fire when Virginia Wade disagreed with one of her calls. She knew Wade would come after her as soon as the match was over, "so I got out of that umpire's chair fast, and ran down the corridor...she caught up with me and said, "You know you just cost me thousands of dollars?" I froze and thought, well, this is all part of the job. But we're good friends now."

Jackson has had to make other tough calls. She remembers overruling a baseline call on a shot hit by Martina Navratilova (from good to out) during a semifinal encounter between Navratilova and Hana Mandlikova. From the look on Mandlikova's face, she thought she might have been wrong. "And I can still see Martina begging me to change my overrule," she said, "but I did not. It cost her the match and also broke her record of most consecutive wins."

She has a thousand stories to tell, like the time she trained women umpires in Japan and "they'd be afraid to call the ball out because they would feel sorry for the player." Or the time a cat gave birth to kittens in a Philadelphia arena during a tournament and Rosie Casals fed them all week. "Every animal Rosie had was a stray," she said. "You can't tell her a

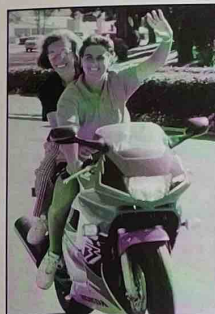


Lee Jackson, pictured with Venus and Serena Williams, is now the WTA Tour's tournament-player liaison in charge of operations on the road.

AlexiaMorion Fochler

sad story about an animal or she'll cry." She helped Casals sneak one of the kittens out of the arena by wrapping it in a blanket, stuffing it in her tennis bag and hustling past the guards.

She once endured a humiliating cushion incident in front of several thousand spectators before a featured match in Texas. She walked onto the court and noticed that all the players were milling about. It



Lee Jackson, 76, likes to take risks riding scooters or accompanying Conchita Martinez on a motorcycle.

The players respect her as much for her sense of humor, intelligence and concern for people as they do for her work in tennis. In fact there's a real mutual admiration, as well as a battle of wits—and wills—going on between Jackson and her tennis friends.

Steffi Graf has said, "I am so happy to see a special person like Lee get the recognition she deserves. I have known her since I first started playing the Tour and she has...been almost a second mother to me." Yet Graf challenged Jackson in a crossword puzzle duel during the recent Masters Series tournament at Indian Wells, Calif., and the Ericsson event in Key Biscayne, Fla. "Steffi's vocabulary is incredible," Jackson said, adding that she looks adorable and sublimely happy."

Jackson also loved word games, as does Navratilova. They once played scrabble in Tokyo, Japan, she said, "and Martina challenged a word of mine, or I challenged a word of hers...but we refused to give in to one another. She called Dallas, Texas, and had someone look the word up in a dictionary before we continued the game...and she was right..."

She has been so close to Chris Evert she was present at her engagements, her wedding to Andy Mills and the birth of their first child. When Evert said recently that "Lee has been a tremendous asset to the game of tennis and...I love her to death," it brought to mind a piece by Steve Flink that captures the spirit of their friendship. "Lee...and I were sitting on the beach during a tournament at Marco Island," said Evert, "and...this para-sailor came over our heads. I started telling Lee about an experience I had para-sailing once in Australia when I got sick to my stomach...tried to tell her how wild and dangerous it is...Lee kept saying she could never do it. Then I

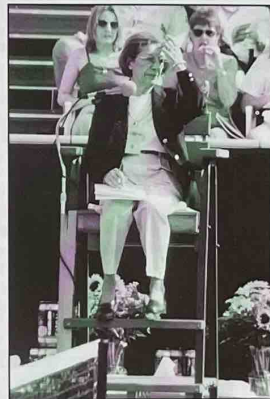
was unusual, but she figured "maybe they just wanted to see the match. I climbed into the chair and sat down...they had put a 'whoopie cushion on the chair and had turned the microphone on. Can you imagine how embarrassing that was? Then they all turned around and left!"

mentioned that I would give her a hundred dollars if she would go up there and para-sail. I thought...she would turn down my offer. But...up she went, waving down at me on the beach and smiling. When it was over, she told me she doesn't know how to swim..."

Jackson stepped down from the chair in the pro game in 1990 and assumed her current position as the Tour's Tournament-Player Liaison in charge of operations on the road. She still works the chair at "hit and giggle" pro-celebrity tournaments, like the Chris Evert charity for children, but now she's more involved in the pros' lives off the court. She impresses upon them the importance of education and cultivating good manners.

"I take them to hospitals and when they see less fortunate youngsters, or people at nursing homes, it's a rude awakening," she said. "When they see how thrilled these people are to see them they are glad they went. The same thing happens at sponsor parties. I drag them by the hand and say 'Introduce yourselves. See that gentleman over there? He's writing your check this week. Make sure you go over and thank him. You'll have a fan for the rest of your life.'"

The great tennis champion Billie Jean King describes the last word here on Lee Jackson: "Mama Lee, the heart and soul of the women's tour." Amen.



Lee Jackson, pictured at a 2000 pro-celebrity tournament, has been a familiar figure in the umpire's chair for more than 40 years.

AlexiaMorion Fochler

GEORGE SEEWAGEN

By Nancy Gill McShea

An editorial in the sports section of *The New York Herald Tribune* once stated unequivocally: "If George Seewagen...had become interested in tennis when he was roaming the courts and diamonds for Newtown High School [in Queens]...we're certain he would have been the champ of the world."

Seewagen, who passed away in 1990 from the effects of a stroke he had suffered a few years earlier, achieved spectacular success in team sports as a young athlete. But a negative first encounter on a tennis court motivated him to do a complete about-face and become the heroic "Iron Horse" of the individual sport of tennis for more than half a century. By example and dedication, he inspired a passion for the game in others and brought respect and great dignity to the role of professional tennis teacher and coach.

He coached at St. John's University for 49 years and taught all week long at clubs around the Eastern Section in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. He was Eastern's Junior Davis Cup coach and conducted free clinics sponsored by the Eastern Tennis Patrons, the forerunner to the present Junior Tennis Foundation. His goal was to get tennis into the schools. "If tennis is to thrive...the schools must play a major role," Seewagen said. "Our schools prepare the individual for life...and are remiss...if they fail to teach youngsters...sports which are available to them in their post school years...After graduation...too many boys and girls confine their interest in sports to the role of spectator.

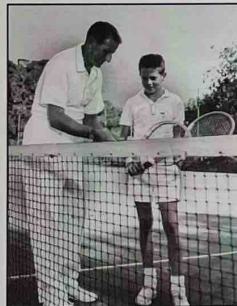
"This is primarily due to the physical education program...sports such as baseball, basketball and football unfortunately have little if any carry over value to post school life."

"My father went seven days a week and seven nights; he was doing clinics all the time," Butch Seewagen said. "I know, because he would always drag me to them. I'd be eight years old and I'd be demonstrating the forehand. Family time was 4 o'clock Monday afternoons. We'd go to Jones Beach and we'd be shivering."

Added Seewagen's daughter Barbara: "Dad could not say no to tennis. I once said to him, 'you're doing too much, you have to give up something.' He decided to quit coaching at St. John's. His team arrived at the house and gave him a plaque. He looked

at me, shrugged and said, 'How can I leave?' and he went back."

Seewagen always preached the joys of teaching to his students. "Teach tennis, teach tennis," he'd say. He inspired at least 50 members of his St. John's teams to become teachers, even while they pursued other careers. And he inspired his regular students to pitch in, too, like the leading New York ophthalmologist Renee Richards, who coached Martina Navratilova. Richards has said she tried to emulate Seewagen because "his dignity and behavior commanded instant respect and became a model for me." Then there was Ted Zoob, the president of the North Shore Tennis Club and a lawyer who was a teaching pro for years at Alley Pond. Seewagen also taught the public advocate Mark Green, who might be giving a few lessons on the sly. Add to the list the familiar names of Rick Liebman, Don Thompson, Willie Notar, Dick Squires, Eddie Bertram, David Benjamin and Terry McMahon.



George Seewagen coached his son Butch, who was ranked among the world's top 100 in the 1970s.

"I watched how George acted and thought 'that's how I would like to be.' He was so classy," said McMahon, who has followed the Seewagen method throughout his 40 years as a junior/collegiate coach. "It was the discipline. George would say, 'You're going to wear all white, exercise strenuously, be courteous, be absolutely fair and try your best all the time. Pretend your opponent is your beloved grandfather or grandfather and treat him accordingly, whether you're winning or losing, regardless of how he treats you.'"

Seewagen had been brought up in a team sport environment as a mascot to the Elmhurst Grays, a baseball team managed by his father. So it followed that sports writers would later tout him as a "clouting All-City first baseman on Newtown's PSAL

championship team." He also achieved All-City status in basketball and was a member of the winning mile relay team at the Penn track relays. He was offered a contract to play for the N.Y. Yankees farm team out of high school, but turned it down to attend Springfield College in Massachusetts. At Springfield, he lettered in baseball, basketball and tennis and was named All-American soccer goalie for the national intercollegiate championship team.

The folk story about the letter in tennis that unfolds in all the newspaper clippings claims that Seewagen's college roommate challenged him to a game of tennis in his junior year and trounced him. So he took a physical education course in tennis, made the team in his senior year and lost only two matches. From that point on, he was a man on a mission. By the mid-1930s he had started his career as a physical education teacher at his Newtown alma mater and was a top-ten Eastern tennis player in the amateur game for three years before he turned teaching pro.

Seewagen made a couple of appearances at the amateur U.S. National Championships at Forest Hills alongside greats Fred Perry, Bobby Riggs, Frank Shields and Don Budge before they, too, turned pro. When he lost to Budge there in 1936 he wore shorts; it was the only time he ever wore shorts on a tennis court, probably in deference to Budge. (Budge won the Grand Slam in 1938 and turned pro in 1939. He was an early proponent of professional tennis, arguing that with the incentive of financial reward, fewer stars would leave the game before they reached their full potential.)

Teaching pros like Seewagen got to play with former amateur champions—among them Budge, Perry, Bill Tilden, Vinnie Richards, Pancho Segura, Jack Kramer, Lew Hoad and Pancho Gonzalez—on the pro tour and at pro exhibitions. Seewagen was a leader in the U.S. Professional (Lawn) Tennis Association, serving as the national president from 1948 to 1953 and again in 1963, and as president of the Eastern division for 12 years. The organization ran the pro game, including the U.S. Pro Championships at Forest Hills, so Seewagen worked them as the tournament director/referee. He bought a tax to referee the pros' matches at Madison Square Garden, and then he'd play exhibitions with the pros at Fordham, at the Notlek Tennis Club (that was owner Frank Kelton's name spelled backward) and at Grossinger's in the Catskills during World War II to raise money for the troops.

During the war, Seewagen was a member of the National Guard and the tournament referee at the U.S. Pro Indoors at the Park Avenue Seventh Regiment Army in Manhattan. Butch and McMahon were ball boys and saw the world's best players up close, like Tony Trabert, Gardnar Mulloy, Vic Seixas, Bill Talbert and Dick Savitt. Butch got to work Savitt's court the three times he won the indoors. "He liked me because when I was a kid he hit with me at the armory," Butch said. McMahon recalled the time a top player got food poisoning and gave him a hard time during his match. "George followed the player into the locker room and told him, quietly, that he was never to speak to any of his ball boys again in that manner or he'd be banned



George Seewagen celebrated his induction into the St. John's University Hall of Fame with (from left) his wife Clella, his daughter Barbara Seewagen Steger and his son Butch.

from the tournament," he said. And what was the player's response? "Yes, sir!"

"My sister and I were never allowed to play as kids before our father whitened our shoes the night before a match," said Butch, who along with Barbara was ranked first in the East and among the country's top juniors. "He said you can not go on the court with dirty shoes. We always felt we couldn't disappoint him with our behavior. And all his students felt the same way." One time when Butch was playing Cliff Richey in the semifinals of the National Boys' 18s at Kalamazoo, he couldn't convert three match points and, in fact, lost by a lot cord. He was crushed. But he won the sportsmanship award and his father told him he was more proud of him for that accomplishment than if he had won the tournament.

Perhaps Butch's wife Chris captured George Seewagen's spirit best when she said, "Tennis was the wind beneath his wings that made him soar."

DICK STOCKTON

By Nancy Gill McShea

The men's tennis coach at the University of Virginia could be mistaken for a professor. He is well thought-out, proficient in the language and speaks with authority. He is more interested in recruiting players who look at the school before they hear from him, because that means they're considering UVA for the right reasons. He also likes the depth and diverse lineups in today's collegiate game that can make any match feel like an international Davis Cup challenge.

The coach is Dick Stockton, and he's been winning tennis championships at the highest levels of the national and international game for over 40 years. He was a junior and collegiate champ; played professionally for 13 years; was ranked No. 8 in the world in 1977 and six times among the U.S. top ten; and a five-year member of the U.S. Davis Cup team; and won his third men's 45 doubles title at the 2000 U.S. Open.

When Stockton turned pro in June of 1972 the game was really taking off in this country, and he and his group of junior tennis buddies—among them Brian Gottfried, Erik van Dillen, Harold Solomon, Eddie Dibbs, Roscoe Tanner and Jimmy Connors—were thrust into the limelight of a major tennis boom and unyielding media scrutiny.

Sports Illustrated featured Stockton and Gottfried in a June '72 piece, "Hail the Trinity twosome," to sum up the NCAA Championships: "The bleachers were jammed with spectators and hundreds more watched from the steep hillside when the pair of tanned singles finalists, both as taut as racket gut—and both from Trinity University (in Texas) were introduced...One was four-time All-American Dick Stockton, a native of Garden City, N.Y., the top seed.

Across the net: Brian Gottfried, Stockton's roommate...Gottfried won the first set and had Stockton muttering, barking at a ball boy, complaining about the net and throwing his racket down in disgust... When Gottfried lost the seventh game of the second set on a close line call it was his turn to launch

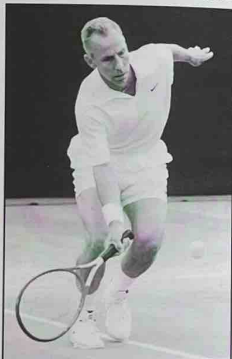
into some fine Pancho Gonzalez imitations: a snarl, a grimace, a glare..." Stockton won the title, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2.

"I played my last amateur match [at the NCAAAs] on Saturday, flew with Brian and another teammate, Paul Gerken, to England on Sunday and we played as pros on Monday," Stockton recalled. "It was kind of a natural progression; we had played a lot of pro tournaments during college. In my second week as a pro I reached the third round of Wimbledon and came away with \$300.

"The seventies was the best time to be playing professional tennis, especially in the second half of the decade," he said. There was tremendous interest in the pro game, more and more people were playing, so there were times when the three major networks had tennis on at the same time. PBS had a lot of tennis, too, and this was all before cable.

Stockton points out that Bjorn Borg, Solomon and Dibbs popularized the slower, topspin baseline exchange that became the vogue and influenced a new generation of players. But Tanner's big serve, Connors' attacking baseline style and Stockton's classic backhand, overhead and volley also fared well on the small screen and impressed tennis fans.

Television aired the Stockton-Connors final at the 1977 U.S. Pro Indoors in Philadelphia and Curry Kirkpatrick covered the tournament for *Sports Illustrated*: "Stockton blitzed his way through Gottfried, Ken Rosewall and Jeff Borowiak without the loss of a set...In the final, Connors...after taking a 2-1 lead in sets, fell behind 3-1 in the fourth...he came to 0-40 against Stockton's serve with three chances to break back, tie the match and run it out... Inexplicably, he



Dick Stockton, once the world's eighth ranked player, still looked like a formidable all-court player at the 2000 Wimbledon Championships.

blew the next three points and lost the game. Stockton resumed serving one-bouncers into the seats, volleying to the corners and dominating the indomitable Connors...In accepting the trophy he said, 'I've never played better for five days in my life.'"

"Dick was playing really well then," agreed Gottfried, recalling that the best thing about the old days was that their group would battle each other on the court and then go to dinner together afterward. "But the thing his friends and I would remember most are the back injuries which cut short his career. He had trouble playing multiple weeks and really struggled with it."

Gottfried said he was 10 and Stockton was 11 when they first played in Chattanooga and "nobody beat Dickie in those days." He was a feared junior champion, winning 20 national titles, the most ever recorded by an Eastern junior (and second only to Scott Davis of the U.S.). He also set a record in doubles with van Dillen by winning the Nationals in each of the four age categories and ranking first in the country for five years. "I was petrified the first year I had to play him, and I was 15 and he was 10," admitted Butch Seewagen, who beat Stockton just that one time.

"There's never been a better junior player than Dickie Stockton," Jimmy Connors said recently. "I loved competing against him. We've played a lot of terrific matches since we were 8 and 9 years old, we've had great times together and still remain the best of friends."

Stockton dismisses his junior titles as "no big deal. You just played and whoever won, won." Yet he admits that you have to be incredibly determined and acknowledges that his mother, Dorothy, once said that his concentration was so good he could be playing and the clubhouse could be on fire and he wouldn't notice.

He defeated legends such as Arthur Ashe, Ilie Nastase, Rod Laver, Guillermo Vilas, Rosewall, Borg and his junior buddies in notching eight singles and 16 pro doubles titles. He was a singles semifinalist at Wimbledon and the French and was twice a quarterfinalist at the U.S. Open. He won five mixed doubles championships: the U.S. Open, the French and the worlds. He posted a 5-5 record as a playing member of the U.S. Davis Cup team and was a member of the 1979 championship squad. He has also won

seven 35s and 45s senior titles at the U.S. Open and Wimbledon.

The most exciting match he was ever involved in was in Hartford, Conn., at the 1975 Aetna World Cup, an annual competition between the U.S. and Australia. Whoever won four of seven matches was the winner. Stockton, Ashe, Stan Smith, Marty Riessen and Bob Lutz made up the U.S. roster, while Laver, Rosewall, John Newcombe, John Alexander and Roy Emerson represented Australia.

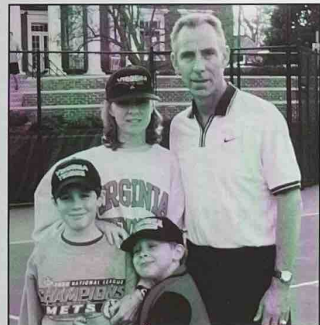
"It was my first year in the thing and I was shocked when our captain Dennis Ralston said I was going to play No. 1 for the U.S.," he said. "I had to play Laver in the first match. I was terrified. We were the only night match scheduled and there wasn't a seat to be had. I was down 3-0 so fast I was afraid it would be over in 20 minutes. Dennis told me to relax and play one point at a time. I found some air to breathe and then played very well. It was 6-6 in the sudden death tie-break and I had two match points on my serve but couldn't do it. I lost, 5-7, 6-4, 7-6, and we lost the match 4-3.

"I cried when it was over and literally had nightmares about that particular match for eight to 10 years."

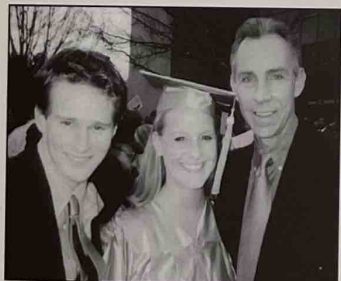
Stockton was hitting with Laver this past February at a Washington charity function and said to him, "Hey Rocket, you know one time you hit me with a ball so hard I thought you were going to kill me. Do you remember that? Laver said, 'Yeah, up at the Aetna Cup.' It surprised me that he remembered all these years later."

At the 1983 U.S. Open, Stockton and Gottfried played doubles on the old Court 3, and Stockton's wife Liz, then a Fordham coed and a ball girl, was assigned to work the match. "Everybody wanted Borg's court," Liz said, "but I knew of Dick because he was a New Yorker and my dad (teaching pro Jaime de Carvalho) raved about him. I remember he and Brian were like this cute, tan, All-American team."

In August of 1994 Liz was again assigned to Stockton's court, to work a clinic with him during the Nuveen senior tournament at the Westchester Country Club in Rye. This time Dick noticed her. After the clinic he asked her to grab a racket and hit with him. Two years later they were married.



Dick Stockton (r) in a Feb. 2001 snapshot with his wife Liz, stepson J.R. Edwards (l) and his son Spencer (r).



Dick Stockton in 1998 with his son Cole and his daughter Sarah.