



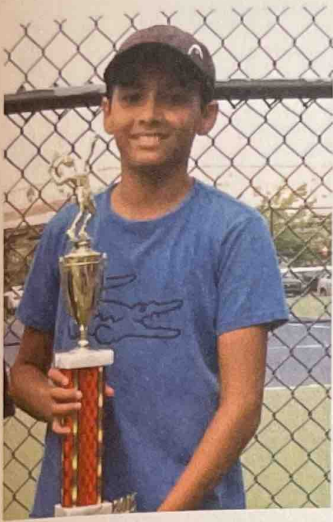
30th Annual Eastern
Tennis Hall of Fame Celebration

to benefit the

Junior Tennis Foundation
Grant and Scholarship Programs

2017 David N. Dinkins Scholarship Award Winners

Akash Mahesh Hongal



Akash Mahesh Hongal, a sixth grader at the Rachel Carson Intermediate School in Queens, N.Y., enjoys competing in tennis tournaments throughout the year. Following in his father's footsteps, Hongal decided to play tennis. He also became interested in playing because he likes watching professional matches on television, particularly when his favorite player, Novak Djokovic, is competing.

On the court, Hongal is most proud of winning a few of USTA Eastern's boys' 12 & under L1B tournaments, along with several City Parks L2R tournaments in 2016. Although Hongal consistently competes in USTA Junior Tournaments, he also actively participates in Junior Team Tennis.

In addition to tennis, Hongal likes playing with friends and reading. As a student-athlete, Hongal considers his favorite subject to be math.

Jamila Akhmedjanova



Jamila Akhmedjanova is a ninth grader at James Madison High School in Brooklyn, N.Y. who has played tennis since she was six years old. Akhmedjanova was inspired to play tennis after watching her older brother compete in the sport. As a native of Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Akhmedjanova was nationally ranked in the top 10 in her age group before moving to the United States in 2014. She aspires to become a professional tennis player and admires WTA player Varvara Lepchenko, also of Tashkent.

Akhmedjanova has been a member of New York Junior Tennis and Learning's (NYJTL) tournament team, coached by Elena Bantovska, since 2014. Her father, who was an eight-time champion of Uzbekistan in track and field, is her fitness coach.

Outside of tennis, Akhmedjanova enjoys social media, the outdoors and watching movies. Her favorite subject in school is English, and she is starting to think about which field she would like to pursue in college.



Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis



Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis, a Senior United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, sees tennis as a critically important sport for urban youth, seniors and people with disabilities.

Growing up in Bayside, N.Y., Garaufis started playing tennis when he was seven years old at North Shore Tennis and Racquets Club where he and his family were longtime members and his father was the president. He learned to play from his father, George, who played extensively until he was in his eighties. George, who grew up disadvantaged in East Harlem, N.Y., credited his success as a

professional engineer to three things: Stuyvesant High School, The Cooper Union and the public tennis courts of Central Park where he played after being given a racquet as a teenager.

"I have been an avid tennis fan for many years," Garaufis said. "I watched my father play and thought it was fabulous to have a sport you could play well into your senior years. Tennis has done a great deal for my family. I have also seen through my wife's work on the Adaptive Tennis Committee of the USTA how important it is as a sport for handicapped youth and disabled veterans."

Prior to his role as a Federal trial judge, Garaufis was Counsel to the Queens Borough President Claire Shulman for nine years, and Chief Counsel of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in Washington D.C. for five years. During his time as Queens Counsel, Garaufis addressed the issue of airplanes flying over the US Open at the National Tennis Center during all matches. Although there was an existing arrangement with the LaGuardia Airport air traffic control tower to disallow airplanes to fly over during just semifinal and final matches, in 1989 the arrangement was broken.

"The planes, at the time, were so noisy players justifiably complained they couldn't hear the ball coming off the racquet," Garaufis said. "The USTA leadership became upset for good reason and contemplated moving the tournament to Atlanta or Chicago."

Garaufis accepted the challenge from the Queens Borough President, his boss at the time, to create a solution. After working with USTA President David Markin and city officials, including newly elected Mayor David Dinkins, Garaufis drafted the papers for the potential agreement.

"We wanted to keep the US Open in New York," Garaufis said. "Therefore, I negotiated the arrangement so that planes wouldn't fly over the US Open for two weeks when people were on the grounds watching tennis. The FAA wasn't going to make a change for the USTA as a private organization, but it would consider doing so if requested by local public officials."

Garaufis' arrangement was inaugurated for the 1990 US Open and has held for more than 25 years, allowing millions of people from across the world to enjoy professional tennis in New York without the disruption of overhead airplanes.

After becoming a judge in 2000, Garaufis, a USTA Life Member, has continued to show his support of the US Open and USTA as a volunteer. He served on the USTA's Executive Committee as Presidential Appointee for four years, where he advised the President and the Board of Directors

on a wide variety of topics, including the further expansion of the National Tennis Center. He also served on the USTA's Public Affairs Committee for four years, the last two as chair.

"The expansion of the National Tennis Center was a great accomplishment for the USTA," Garaufis said. "The improvements enhanced the US Open which provides a financial engine for tennis to be available in all communities throughout the country, while also generating revenue for the City of New York. I am proud to have been a part of it with so many wonderful colleagues in the world of tennis."



Above: Nick and his wife, Betsy, watching a recent US Open match in Arthur Ashe Stadium; below: National Tennis Center Lease Signing, New York City Hall, December 1993. Mayor Dinkins, seated center, signs the 99-year National Tennis Center lease as NYC and USTA leaders look on, including, seated right to left, Queens Borough President Claire Shulman, USTA Past President David Markin, Dinkins, USTA 2nd VP Harry Marmion, City Council Speaker Peter Vallone; standing far left, Counsel to Queens Borough President Nick Garaufis and Skip Hartman, and third from right, Parks Commissioner Betsy Goibaum.

Christine, Patricia and Theresa O'Reilly

O'Reilly is a familiar name in the tennis world. The O'Reilly triplets, Christine, Patricia and Theresa, from Ridgewood, N.J., were dominant Eastern junior players who also excelled at the collegiate and professional levels.

Entering their first tournament at the age of 10, they didn't waste any time in pursuing success on the court.

"Christine won the first tournament we all played," Patricia O'Reilly said. "When we were young we played many sports. We really enjoyed the competition."

The O'Reilly sisters went on to earn countless trophies and accolades. Throughout their junior careers Christine, Patricia and Theresa were all ranked No. 1 in different age divisions of the Eastern Section. They had impressive victories in local and national USTA tournaments. Christine and Theresa won the USTA Indoor Doubles National Championship when they were 16 years old and Theresa was also an Olympic Qualifying finalist.

Patricia won the Rolex International tournament in the girls' 18s and was a finalist in several National Championships. Due to their tennis success, they appeared in numerous media venues – national television, magazines and newspapers.

When their careers as Eastern juniors were nearing completion the triplets were recruited to play tennis for numerous Division I schools. The O'Reilly sisters decided to join the Duke University women's tennis team.

"Duke offered a wonderful balance of athletics and academics," Patricia said. "We also thought we could build a national tennis program for the university."

The O'Reilly sisters did just that. The triplets led the university to three ACC tournament titles, starting a 13-season ACC winning streak with 116 consecutive ACC match victories. They also led Duke to its first NCAA Women's National Tennis Championship appearance in 1988, which has continued through the years. The O'Reilly sisters were on the academic dean's list while at Duke, and Patricia was a two-time NCAA All-American.

"When you're in the midst of something you may not realize it, but when you take a step back you recognize what a great accomplishment it was," Patricia said. "It was a wonderful time in our lives and we were blessed to have had the opportunity to play at Duke."



Above: The O'Reilly sisters training at Saddlebrook Tennis Academy in Florida; below: The O'Reilly sisters' junior playing days.

As a senior, Patricia was named ACC Player of the Year and ITCA/Volvo Tennis Southeast Region Senior Player of the Year in 1990. The O'Reilly sisters were inducted into Duke University's Athletics Hall of Fame in 2004 for their incredible accomplishments in bringing the women's tennis program to national prominence. They also have a tennis court named after them at the Sheffield Indoor Tennis Center on campus. Duke University has stated that the O'Reilly triplets set the standard for Duke student-athletes.

"Seeing the team win the National Championship in 2009 brought tears to my eyes," Patricia said. "It's incredibly exciting to see the program succeed today."

After graduation, the O'Reilly sisters competed professionally for almost four years. They competed against notable opponents such as Mary Joe Fernandez, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Katrina Adams, Lindsay Davenport, Chanda Rubin, Zina Garrison, among others.

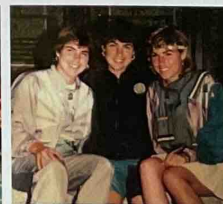
"Traveling to various countries to compete was a fantastic experience," Patricia said. "I met so many wonderful people and it was exciting to play against the best in the world."

In 1993, while on a business trip in California, Christine suffered a traumatic head injury in a car accident. She passed away at the age of 25. Today, both Patricia and Theresa reside in Georgia. Patricia is a partner at the Universal Tennis Academy (UTA) in Atlanta. UTA manages tennis facilities and operates adult and junior tennis programs for people of all ages and abilities. Theresa works as a senior sales representative for AbbVie and enjoys playing tennis for fun with her family.

Patricia and Theresa agree their favorite aspect of the sport is that it can be played at any age. They also feel it is a great way to think "outside of the box." They believe the discipline and dedication necessary to be a successful tennis player are the same characteristics necessary to be successful in life.

Being inducted into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame makes the O'Reilly sisters' tennis journey come full circle.

"It is such a great honor to be inducted into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame," Theresa O'Reilly said. "Competing in the ETA when I was younger holds wonderful and special memories for me. It was such a competitive group of players, and there were many life lessons learned through ETA tournaments."



L to R: The O'Reilly sisters' Duke playing days; the sisters receiving the Nine West Outstanding Achievement Award in Madison Square Garden as junior players; competing at Pathmark Tennis Classic in Mahwah, N.J.

Steve Siegel

Steve Siegel has been actively involved with tennis in the Eastern Section for almost 60 years. He first became interested in the sport after watching his older brother play in tournaments.

"My brother was a huge influence on me," Siegel said. "Playing with him and other older kids made me better, so when I played kids my own age I had quite an advantage. Our parents never played, but we had public courts near our house so we basically fell into it."



As a native of Teaneck, N.J., Siegel grew up hitting and began playing Eastern tournaments when he was 10 years old and National tournaments at age 12. Siegel demonstrated significant success as an Eastern junior as he was ranked as high as No. 1 in the section for boys' 14s, 16s and 18s throughout his time competing.

"It was exciting to do well enough in the East to be on a team that would go to National tournaments," Siegel said. "Traveling with kids I became friends with to compete against kids from around the country was an amazing experience."

During Siegel's senior year at Teaneck High School, Siegel won the boys' tennis state championship. He went on to play collegiately at Miami Dade Junior College North for two years, where he was a two-time All-American in singles and doubles. Siegel won the National Junior College men's doubles title his first year and the men's singles title his second year. He then played varsity singles and doubles the following two years at the University of Miami.

After college, Siegel competed professionally qualifying for several ATP tournaments including the US Open and the French Open. He rose as high as No. 244 in the world in singles competing against a wide variety of notable opponents including: Rod Laver, Billie Jean King and Arthur Ashe. Siegel considers one of his most exhilarating matches one he played against Ilie Nastase, who was ranked in the top three in the world at the time, in Paramus, N.J.

"When you're playing a match in which you have nothing to lose, it is easier than playing someone you're supposed to beat," Siegel said. "It was a great experience and thrilling to play in front of family and friends."

Siegel also played in the Eastern Section his entire adult career and continued to compete in the senior divisions. He won several men's singles tournaments, ranking No. 1 in the Eastern Section in 1975, in the men's 35s in 1983, the men's 40s in 1988 and the men's 45s in 1993.

In addition to competing, Siegel worked as a teaching professional for more than 40 years. Siegel worked with top Eastern juniors as well as adults.

"It was an easy transition to go from playing to teaching," Siegel said. "I enjoyed teaching because it is one of the few lifetime sports people can have fun playing at any age and level."

Siegel worked as a head teaching professional at Englewood Indoor, Teaneck Tennis Club and Edgewood Country Club in New Jersey over the course of

approximately 20 years before becoming the Director of Racquet Sports at Plandome Country Club in Plandome, N.Y. for 22 years. Through his role at Plandome Country Club, Siegel led all junior and adult tennis programming.

"Working with younger people makes you stay young," Siegel said. "When I started at Plandome I was younger than most of the people and when I ended I was older than most of the people."

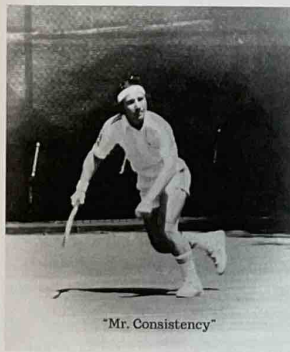
In December 2016, Siegel moved to Houston, Texas and relished the notion that he knew people upon arriving to his new home because of



Steve winning the Bergen County Boys' Tennis Championship for the second time in 1960.

tennis. Siegel still continues to play tennis on a regular basis. Although he may not reside within the Eastern Section anymore, Siegel is proud of the work he has done and the 60-year relationships he has developed with tennis friends across the country.

"I am thrilled to be included with some of the incredible people who have been inducted into Eastern's Hall of Fame," Siegel said. "It is the biggest honor you can have growing up in the area."



Steve competing at the Washington Star International in 1972 vs. Arthur Ashe.

Dick Zausner

Dick Zausner, a resident of Port Washington, N.Y., is an instrumental part of tennis in the Eastern Section, and has been for more than 30 years. Zausner, the Director at Port Washington Tennis Academy (PWTA), has given thousands of youth and adults the opportunity to try tennis.

Zausner's father, Hy, started PWTA in 1966 with the goal to help people, particularly children. Zausner, who took over PWTA in the 1980s after his father had medical issues, continues to lead the organization with his father's values in mind.

"Our main goal is to be able to help children earn college scholarships," Zausner said.

"We are a non-profit organization that believes in providing as many opportunities for children that we can."

PWTA, home to 17 indoor courts, offers a wide variety of tennis programming for players of all ages and levels. Some of the programs in which more than 300 children and 400 adults currently participate include: junior development, summer and winter camps, adult clinics, leagues and private lessons, among others. PWTA, a popular tournament location, also hosts approximately 24 USTA Eastern sanctioned tournaments a year.

Zausner holds PWTA to a high standard when it comes to the quality of programming offered. In turn, he provides his staff with a positive atmosphere to excel at their jobs. An example of this is the on-site housing Zausner offers to teaching professionals as a more affordable solution to nearby rentals.

"I don't treat my employees like employees," Zausner said. "It is a much more relaxed mentality. I value the people who work for me, and am proud to have several longtime employees."

In keeping with the high quality opportunities offered at PWTA, the organization provides snacks to anyone who visits. Guests and frequent players, alike, can find cookies, tea, milk, juice and packaged soups, along with several other treats, to enjoy during their time at PWTA.

"This is something we have been doing for years," Zausner said. "We always have food available for people when they walk in, that way no one leaves hungry."



Dick at Port Washington Tennis Academy. Photo credit: Brian Coleman.

PWTA also supports local charities that focus on benefiting children. The organization recently made a major donation for a multi-use athletic field behind its building that is unrelated to tennis, but now features the PWTA name.

"We give donations to nearby groups that are specific to children," Zausner said. "PWTA only supports organizations that we feel could use the money. We like to make a meaningful dent, rather than just make small donations."

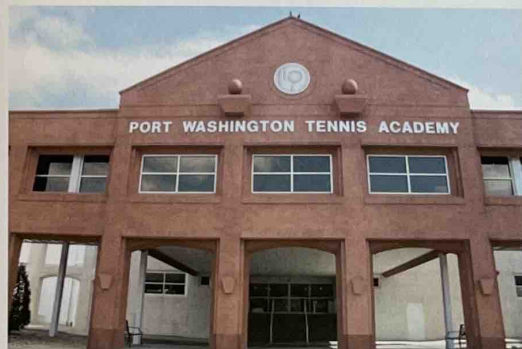
Through his work with PWTA, Zausner was Chairman of USTA Eastern's Junior Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee. In this role, he handled rule explanation and tournament draw questions for more than a decade.

An advocate for junior tennis, Zausner has been actively involved for more than 10 years as the publisher of College and Junior Tennis, an online magazine. The magazine features recent tournament results and information for junior players looking to compete in college.

"I feel this is a good way to disseminate tournament results," Zausner said. "When I started as publisher, there was nothing else like it at the time."

Although Zausner is not a fan of personal recognition, he considers being inducted into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame a nice honor. He is proud of what PWTA has done to help children through tennis and continues to work diligently to further develop the game. In doing so, 83-year-old Zausner, who began playing tennis when PWTA was built, comes into work every day, and even enjoys hitting some tennis balls.

"I didn't start playing tennis as a youngster," Zausner said. "Now I play for fun two times a week. Playing tennis as you get older is about keeping the ball in play rather than trying to beat someone. I enjoy the exercise, and it keeps my mind occupied."



Port Washington Tennis Academy, April 2017. Photo credit: Brian Coleman.