



27th Annual Eastern
Tennis Hall of Fame Celebration
to benefit the
Junior Tennis Foundation
Grant and Scholarship
Programs

2014 David N. Dinkins Scholarship Award Winners



Gabriel Sifuentes ★



Gabriel Sifuentes is a freshman at St. Francis Preparatory High School. He has been playing tennis since the age of six. His first lessons were at Juniper Valley Park in their free community programs provided by New York Junior Tennis & Learning (NYJTL).

Discovering he had a passion for tennis, his parents enrolled him at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center's junior program. In 2008, Gabriel tried out for NYJTL's Advanced Training program, and he has been a participant ever since.

He enjoys competing in tournaments, and will be part of his school's varsity tennis team this spring. NYJTL has helped Gabriel on and off the court by instilling in him the importance of community service, leadership, hard work and academic excellence.

Gabriel is honored to receive the David N. Dinkins Award, and he looks forward to college and to all the opportunities the future may hold.



Isis Gill ★

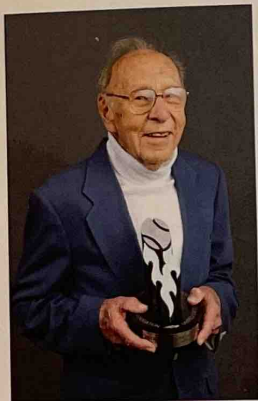
Isis Gill, 16, is a student at Beacon High School in Manhattan, New York. She first started playing tennis at nine years old and grew up on the courts of Highland Park.

Isis first competed in a USTA tournament at 10 years old at the CityParks Tournament Series and has been a member of the CityParks Foundation's Lacoste Junior Tennis Academy for the past three years.

Among her many tennis accomplishments, Isis was MVP of Beacon's varsity team in 2012 and 2013, playing the first position from 2012 to 2014. She has captured titles at multiple New York City events, including the 2013 PSAL team championship with Beacon and the 2013 individual doubles championship. Isis also became the Mayor's Cup doubles champion in 2010, 2011, and 2013. Additionally, she has been ranked inside the USTA Eastern top 50 in both the 16s and 18s divisions.

Outside of tennis, Isis enjoys dance and is a third-level brown belt in tae kwon do. She excels scholastically too, currently holding a 3.3 GPA.

Dick Walther



Dick recently received USTA National's Seniors' Service Award for teaching players over age 70.

For Dick Walther of Summit, New Jersey, his upcoming induction into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame has been decades in the making. Now, at 91 years young, Walther has been pivotal in growing tennis through innovative programs.

From coaching and teaching middle school students to inspiring seniors to step on a court for the first time, "Coach Dick" has time and again used tennis as a platform to build a sense of community in Summit.

Dick, who was designated Eastern's Leslie J. FitzGibbon Tennis Man of the Year in 2007 and New Jersey Volunteer of the Year in 2011, didn't play tennis growing up. After serving during World War II, he was introduced to the sport in his 30s. He became passionate about teaching and growing the game in 1985.

"It was retirement that triggered my interest in tennis," said Dick. "I've been playing and working on projects in the community for the last 30 years." Most recently he was ranked No. 1 in the Men's 90 singles division.

About 10 years ago, Summit's Board of Recreation was set to destroy many of their 16 public tennis courts. This led Dick and a group of concerned citizens to band together and create the Summit Tennis Association.

Their effort has grown the game immeasurably. In fact, the number of people visiting the courts has more than tripled to 9,000 this past year alone!

Dick believes helping special needs children play tennis is one of his most important initiatives. Through Summit's program, high school players mentor children with autism. Dick said, "Witnessing the smiles on the kids' faces is particularly powerful."

He considers another highlight to be coaching and inspiring seniors to play tennis for the first time with 10 and Under Tennis equipment. In fact, he recently was awarded the USTA's Seniors' Service Award for his efforts.

"Seniors generally feel they are too old and too slow to play the game,"

said Dick. "But we've found that the slower bouncing, low compression balls make it easier for them to play tennis." By combining the USTA's technology with his love of tennis, Dick has helped ensure that many other seniors can begin playing.

"Dick truly embodies what it means to be an advocate for our sport. Thanks to his efforts on and off the court, thousands of players of all ages and abilities have been able to enjoy the sport of a lifetime," said Kurt Kamperman, the Chief Executive of Community Tennis for the USTA. "We are proud to recognize him for all that he has given to tennis and especially for his efforts in getting seniors to pick up the sport for the first time or come back to the game."

Dick has also coached in New Jersey schools. "One of the best things was when I was coaching at Kent Place Girls School," he said. "Coaching has been so important to me over the years. My philosophy has always been to make tennis a fun experience that has a lasting impact so that kids want to continue with the game."

"Winning is nice, and we've had pretty good seasons as far as our record goes, but it's not of primary importance," said Dick. "I would rather see the kids focus on the game, enjoy it, and work through wins and losses. I think that's a maturing experience."

According to Cindy Stern, who has collaborated with Dick through the Summit Tennis Association, "He's just an incredible person who always does more work than is asked of him."

Cindy continued that Dick's focus has never been to promote high performance tennis. "He's always been enthusiastic about having the average person play and making sure they enjoy the game."



Dick has helped build the tennis community in Summit, New Jersey through his coaching.

Marilyn Aschner Katz

For Marilyn Aschner Katz (Queens, NY), a legendary Eastern tennis player during the 1960s and early 1970s, being inducted into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame brings her life's accomplishments "full circle."

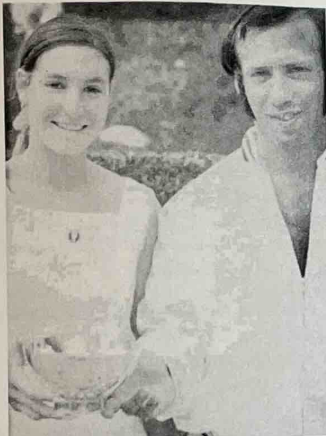
As a top-ranked junior, Marilyn started dreaming big thanks to her parents' support. Her mother and father would take her to tournaments, watch her at practice, and encourage her to play the sport she loved. They made many sacrifices for her tennis and showed "incredible devotion," she said.

Tennis was an important part of her parents' history, too. As German refugees to the United States from World War II, they met on a tennis court in Manhattan's Washington Heights. Marilyn remembers watching her father play as a child. As each year passed, she became more excited to finally pick up a racket for herself. She started at age 11 and has been around the game ever since.

Marilyn used her early accomplishments in the Eastern section as a springboard for success. After playing for Queens College, she later broke into the world's top 30 by the end of the 1960s, competing in events both nationally and internationally. Those experiences make her even prouder to be inducted. "It's so touching to me because Eastern is where my career really started," she said.

Marilyn considers her first time competing at the Orange Bowl Junior Championships in 1964 a junior career highlight. Eastern supported her trip, which gave her the self-belief to win. "I was so proud that Eastern had the confidence in me to fly me to the Orange Bowl," she said. She made the most of the experience, finishing as the runner-up in singles in the 16s division. She also finished as a finalist in 1966 and claimed the doubles title in the 18s.

That served as the start of her success on tennis' biggest stages. Marilyn went on to play eight US Opens, two Wimbledon, and the French Open.



Marilyn and Steve Ross won the Eastern Mixed Doubles Championships together in 1970.

With her penetrating groundstrokes, she set up historic matches against legends, including Billie Jean King, at the National Clay Court Championship.

Marilyn remembers playing at the US Open for the first time as a 16 year-old. When she arrived on the grounds of the West Side Tennis Club for the tournament, she was surprised by all of the attention she received as a hometown hero. "It was a really unbelievable experience," she said. "As a local girl playing, it was a really big deal." She advanced to a career-best third round at the US Open.

Among her international travels, Marilyn competed in France, Italy, Colombia, Venezuela and other countries around the world. She recalls traveling by herself many times during her career and learning the importance of being self-sufficient. Playing at Wimbledon, however, was one of her proudest moments as an athlete. "The history behind Wimbledon is what makes it extraordinary," she said.

Steve Ross, a longtime friend of Marilyn's and a legendary Eastern player who was inducted into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame last year, says she had the drive to succeed from a young age. "What made Marilyn successful was hard work," said Steve. "When she went on the court you could look at her and see the determination in her face, and her desire to want to win." Together, Marilyn and Steve formed a top mixed doubles

team in the section. They won the Eastern Mixed Doubles Championship in 1970, among other events.



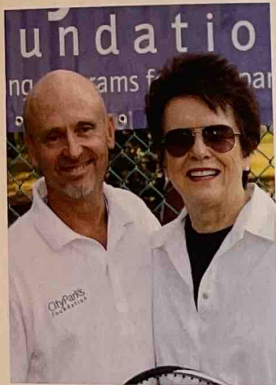
Marilyn coached Eastern juniors after her playing career ended. She now teaches adults in Florida.

After her playing career ended, Marilyn switched to coaching. As a coach at the Port Washington Tennis Academy, she has worked with some of Eastern's most celebrated players, including John McEnroe, Mary Carillo, and Vitas Gerulaitis. Currently she coaches adults in Florida.

Reflecting on her tennis career and her latest vote of confidence from Eastern by being inducted into the Hall of Fame five decades after her Orange Bowl trip, Marilyn is thrilled. "Again, it just comes full circle," she said. "It's amazing."

Mike Silverman

It was the summer of 1981, and Mike Silverman, fresh out of college with an undergraduate degree in political science, thought he had his future all figured out. "My plan had two phases: take a year off to work and travel and then head to law school the following year," Mike said. "I never made it past phase one, and looking back now, I'm glad I didn't."



Mike with longtime friend and supporter Billie Jean King.

That summer, Mike accepted a six-week job giving free beginner tennis lessons to kids for the New York City Parks Department. "I really enjoyed working with children who might not be able to afford tennis lessons and being involved with a sport that I love," he said. The season ended with a free, fun-filled clinic for 300 kids in Central Park organized by Vitas Gerulaitis. The clinic featured John McEnroe and Bjorn Borg, who ranked one and two in the world at the time. Every child received a free tennis racquet.

"That event made a lasting impression on me about the potential of connecting public parks with the private sector to grow the sport and inspire kids," Mike said. "When I was offered an unexpected year-round position that fall, I decided to stay and see how I could contribute."

Mike's far-reaching impact on tennis in New York City began in earnest a few years later when he was appointed director of that program, which today is one of the largest and most progressive free tennis efforts for kids in the United States, reaching 7,500 children annually with free lessons in 38 parks throughout the five boroughs. "At the time we offered citywide beginner lessons and a small advanced academy at the National Tennis Center, but no clear pathway existed in between," Mike said. "We were also too dependent on the city for funding, which limited our ability to expand our services and control our own destiny."

The first of many new initiatives Mike created was the "Penn Series," an authentic junior tournament circuit held in city parks. The low-cost summer circuit has made USTA sanctioned tournaments more accessible and affordable for thousands of New York City juniors and helped pave the way for a Metro-region ranking designation for the city's five boroughs.

Mike also enlisted Reebok's support to save and expand his advanced-training academy from budget cuts, a partnership that would last 28 years. The effort has since helped produce over 100 college scholarship recipients and career professionals, including Jenny Schnitzer, USTA Eastern's Assistant Executive Director, and Esu Ma'at, Metro's Tennis Service Representative.

A major speed-bump occurred in 1991, when Mike and most of his staff were laid off by the Parks Department due to city budget cuts. It proved to be a blessing in disguise. Several weeks later, a newly formed non-profit organization, City Parks Foundation (CPF), hired Mike to preserve and grow the program. This reborn effort, called CityParks Tennis, has flourished ever since, thanks to public/private partnerships with key supporters including the USTA, Chase, and the legendary Billie Jean King, who learned to play in a public park.



Mike and Vitas Gerulaitis took part in a Central Park youth tennis clinic in 1988.

In 1998, Billie Jean and her friend Steve Osman helped Mike establish an annual benefit that has since raised over two million dollars for CityParks Tennis. "I have seen firsthand the magic that Mike works and I admire and continue to support the enormous, free tennis program he oversees for the City Parks Foundation," Billie Jean said. "Mike has introduced and popularized our sport to countless kids and adults over the past 30 years and he is making a big difference in the lives of so many people."

Now CPF's Director of Sports, Mike has used his tennis program as a model to create additional free, park-based opportunities for kids to learn new sports such as track & field and golf. "Promoting tennis to kids will always be closest to my heart," said Mike, who still finds creative and innovative ways to connect youth to opportunities around the city. His most recent brainchild, called "PLAY TODAY," encourages avid juniors to network and arrange same-day, indoor practice sessions for \$5 an hour at participating NYC parks tennis concessions. Mike is an active member of US Professional Tennis Registry (PTR) and currently serves as an advisor for the Parks Department's ongoing 10 and Under Tennis court conversions.

Tim Mayotte

Tim Mayotte, who reached a career-high ranking of No. 7 in the world, never imagined he would one day receive the Eastern section's highest honor: a spot in the Tennis Hall of Fame. But the former Olympic silver medalist and Grand Slam semifinalist is thrilled to be recognized for his commitment to coaching Eastern juniors over the last couple decades.

Before becoming a standout coach in the section, Tim, who grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, was an avid sports fan in his family of eight. While growing up as the youngest child in the Mayotte clan, he was pushed to succeed by his older siblings. "For a long time I was the worst player in the family," said Tim, laughing. With fond memories playing on the clay courts near his house as a child, he would dream of one day becoming a professional athlete.

Tim always figured he would work in sports, but not necessarily in tennis. "When I was nine I remember telling a friend that I was going to be a professional athlete," he said. "But I always thought I was going to play baseball."

Tennis, however, would become the sport in which Tim excelled. Eventually, he earned a spot on the Stanford University tennis team, which served as the launching point for his distinguished professional career. "I was a good athlete, but it wasn't until I was at Stanford that I realized I could be a pro," said Tim. "I was surprised when I kept moving up the ranks."

After winning the 1981 NCAA Men's Singles title, "Gentleman Tim" kicked off his illustrious professional career, including claiming 12 ATP singles titles from 1981-90. He counts his Wimbledon success among his career highlights. "I felt comfortable there," said Tim. "Wimbledon, to me, was the tournament that was the center of my tennis year." He reached the quarterfinals seven times and made one semifinal appearance.

Tim considers winning the silver medal at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul another one of his proudest moments. While walking out on court and playing for the United States was powerful, so was seeing his parents in



Tim claimed the Queen's Club title in 1986. He also reached the Wimbledon semifinals.

the stands. "Winning the medal was surreal because it was the only time my dad and mom watched me play," he said.

Upon retiring from competition in 1992, Tim made the transition to coaching. One of his first positions was to head the USTA High Performance Training Center in New York. His goal now is to inspire a strong work ethic in the juniors he coaches at the Mayotte Hurst Tennis Academy in Queens. "Apart from his obvious experiences playing at the highest level, Tim's background really helps with teaching the youngest players at our academy," said Lee Hurst, a former pro and his partner at the academy.

"There are so many driven people looking to play college and play professionally," continued Lee, who has learned from Tim's demanding coaching style. "He can be quite challenging as a coach and he won't just take an idea as gospel," he said. "Tim is very curious about why things work and he makes me rethink what I do."

With success at the US Open and from training his players in Queens, Tim has taken a real shine to the borough and the Eastern section in general. "I have really grown to love Queens and to see the potential there," he said. "It's one of the most diverse counties in the country."

As a coach, Tim feels he has taken his passion for tennis to another level. "I just love the game and I enjoy the chance to work with kids and give them as much joy for the game as I have," he said. "It is a huge honor being recognized as a coach and as a contributor to the game through my induction into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame."



Tim helped run a clinic at the East Brunswick Racquet Club in December 2010.