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## JIMMY ARIAS

By Nancy Gill McShea

Two weeks ago when Jimmy Arias was calling the Davis Cup quarterfinal between the United States and Spain for the Versus sports channel, he analyzed the nuances of each point played and told the television audience: "It's tough to break a tennis player's spirit in Davis Cup because you have a captain who won't let you throw in the towel...and a team that's counting on you."



Eastern junior stars Kathleen Horvath (l) and Jimmy Arias.

and ESPN International. "I try to break down the match from a strategy standpoint, explain patterns in the points...and say exactly what I think whether the players like it or not."

He knows what he's talking about. Arias waged legendary five-set battles on the red clay of South America as a member of the U.S. Davis Cup team and in Grand Slam competition. In 1984, at age 19, he was ranked No. 5 in the world on the ATP Tour and was a marquee player during the golden era of tennis that featured Grand Slam event champions John McEnroe, Jimmy Connors, Ivan Lendl, Boris Becker, Bjorn Borg and Mats Wilander. Arias played professionally for 15 years, won five singles titles, reached the finals 11 times and often made it to the semis and quarters of major tournaments. He was a singles semifinalist at the 1984 Olympics and won the 1981 French mixed doubles title with Andrea Jaeger.

He exited the pro tour at the 1994 US Open on Court 18 before 100 fans, a week after he turned 30. *The New York Times* reported that Arias, one of the game's original phenoms, who marched out of...Bollettieri's...full of confidence with a howitzer forehand, smacked a forehand wide to lose [to a Swede] and said afterward: "It's tough not to be a tennis player anymore...I've been a tennis player all of my life..."

Now, almost 13 years removed from that match, Arias is still a tennis player and a visible authority in the game. "Jimmy is an expert at evaluating the physical and mental implications of a player's actions on the court," his longtime coach Nick Bollettieri said. "He remembers details of every match he has ever played,

which gives him an edge in recalling players' stats when he's analyzing a match...He has a quick mouth and a gift of gab that engages the television audience and allows him to still joke around and talk opponents right out of a match on the senior tour."

Within one week this past March, Arias transmitted match intensity to fans from the TV booth — as Leyton Hewitt salvaged a tie break to defeat Jurgen Melzer in the final of the Tennis Channel Open in Las Vegas — then hopped on a red eye to Florida and played McEnroe, Wilander and Aaron Krickstein at Jim Courier's Oliver Group Champions Cup tournament in Naples. He didn't win but said he's having more fun playing now. "It keeps me in shape, forces me to go train and I'm actually playing kind of well." Even fans notice that Jimmy grins a lot, still packs a wallop of a forehand and competes on a high level.

The Arias stats are recorded in the history books, but the stuff that occurs off the court — the intangible influences of daily life that mold a champion — is more intriguing.

He began competing in tournaments at age 5 in Buffalo, N.Y. By the time he was 8, people were wowed by his strong forehand and he knew he would someday play pro tennis. His dad, Antonio, a native of Spain and an electrical engineer, taught him the forehand. "My dad didn't know anything about tennis but he was...somewhat visionary because he thought about things mathematically," Jimmy said. "I took a lesson from Ian Fletcher...who made the fourth round of the Australian Open. In those days, players took the racket straight back, had a Continental or Eastern grip, and stopped the follow through (like McEnroe and Billie Jean King do on the forehand approach). I took the lesson, came off the court and said to my dad, 'What do you think?' He said, 'That's the stupidest thing I ever heard in my life. How can you swing full speed and stop? You have to slow your racket down to stop. You should let your arm go and finish the stroke.'"

"That was one reason I did so well so young. The people I was playing were just guiding the ball and I was hitting as hard as I could (using topspin). That set me apart...My [one-handed] backhand was disparaged a bit when I was coming up but when



Jimmy Arias was ranked No. 5 in the world.

I was playing well I could hit heavy topspin to my opponent's backhand and hit pretty nice angles..."

Jimmy moved to Florida at age 13 to train with Bollettieri — he was the first boy to live in Bollettieri's home along with 6-7 girls, including Carling Bassett and Kathleen Horvath — and he arrived at the academy with his forehand in place.

Said Bollettieri, "After watching him for two minutes, I called my staff together and said that is the way we would now teach the Bollettieri Killer Forehand. Jimmy was very much responsible for changing the whole way of hitting the classic forehand to the new semi-western grip. (Krickstein, Agassi and Courier would all imitate him)... Jimmy was small in size, but he had that forehand, quick feet...and that quick mouth.

"He had the inner spirit and passion to be a winner and was willing to do whatever had to be done to be a top player. He has a big, big heart...that is why he succeeded.

"He practiced with every level of player with every style of play...to be ready to play against any opponent. He was totally competitive and ready to play satellites at 15."

In 1983, his best year, Arias won in singles at the Italian Open, in Florence, Indianapolis and Palermo and was a finalist at Boston and Washington. He pulled a stomach muscle at the French en route to the round of 16 and pulled out of Wimbledon. He recovered and played his favorite match, against Yannick Noah, in the quarters of the US Open. "Playing the Open at night under the lights is electric," he said. "Noah served at 5-6 and 15-40 in the fifth and I was looking at a second serve. I was so nervous I couldn't swallow. He hit it right down the center and I tried to return it hard down the center but anxiety caused me to hit it so far out in front, it went for an angled winner." Arias exhaled and fell to Lendl in the semis before a packed house in Louis Armstrong Stadium.

In the fall of 1983 he was hospitalized with mononucleosis and didn't play again until 1984. He returned to the tour and noticed that some kind of glitch had crept into his forehand swing. At the same time, the game was changing rapidly. Players had switched from wood to composite rackets, creating a plethora of power merchants. As a result, his forehand, "once such an explosive weapon, no longer produced winners at will.

Jimmy still found a way to win matches - he made the semis of WTC/Dallas, Monte Carlo, the Tournament of Champions in N.Y., Boca West and La Quinta, the quarterfinals in Philadelphia, Memphis, Richmond, Boston, Barcelona and the French Open and the round of 16 at Wimbledon - but he was winning on desire rather than dictating play. "I ran hard and tried hard but couldn't hit winners anymore," he said. "I basically played on guts alone for the rest of my career!"

In Davis Cup, Arias played for captain Arthur Ashe on the 1984 U.S. team that lost 4-1 to Sweden. He played

in 1986 for captain Tom Gorman and the U.S. defeated Ecuador, 3-2. Arias lost to Andres Gomez, 7-5, 4-6, 4-6, 9-7, 6-4, in the first match but defeated Raul River, 6-3, 6-1, 6-4, to clinch the tie. The tough South American crowd yelled "Aah!!!" every time he missed against Gomez. So Jimmy retaliated. He served an ace at deuce and 4-4 in the fifth and said he screamed: "Aah!!!" The crowd went bananas. They were screaming, swearing and I just smiled. Then a guy pulled out a flare gun and we didn't play for about 15 minutes..."

In 1987 the U.S. lost 3-2 to Paraguay. Gorman told Arias to just play and not rile the crowd. "It probably saved my life," he said. "I was down 2 sets to love and match point, came back to 2 sets all and was up 5-1 in the fifth when things spiraled out of control. Lots of bad overrules and line calls. I lost, 6-4, 6-1, 5-7, 3-6, 9-7, and felt so beaten down by the crowd...they were relentless. When the match ended someone threw a brick from the top of the stadium. It glanced my head and I just took off running. After Krickstein lost the fifth match, the linesmen jumped up and raised their hands in the air [in a victory cheer]. It was ridiculous. Paraguay was suspended for 2 years after that."

After Paraguay, he was struggling and felt totally depressed. He went to see Jim Loehr [the psychologist], who suggested that he start joking with the crowd again to have some fun. He posted good results and beat Becker and Wilander along the way.

The Davis Cup debacles in South America did not break the spirit of Jimmy Arias. "That was part of what I was dreaming about when I was growing up," he said. "I was proud that even when I had no confidence or my best stuff, I had the ability to fight to the bitter end [down there]. It makes me sad that I didn't make a late run at some Grand Slam heroics...but as I get older, I appreciate that not many people get to No. 5 in the world... My expectations were higher but I'm proud that I was able to compete with the best players in the world during those last years — on guts alone."



Gina and Jimmy Arias (rear, l-r) with their children Spencer (front, left), a tennis player, and Julia, who plays the forward position on her basketball team.



## JOSEPH F. CULLMAN III

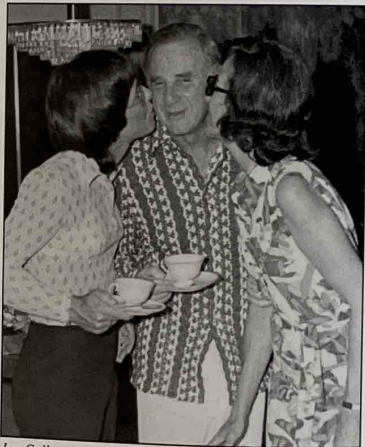
By Nancy Gill McShea

Joe Cullman, the former president and chief executive officer of the Philip Morris Company who passed away in 2004, was, by all accounts, a generous man with a wonderful sense of humor who made significant contributions to many charitable organizations. Cullman has earned legendary status in this venue as the controversial "angel of tennis" who together with Gladys Heldman and Billie Jean King helped underwrite an independent women's professional tour at the beginning of the Open era.

Many people question whether a tobacco company should have been involved in sports. But at a time before Title IX mandated gender equity, few, if any, sponsors were willing to support women's athletics. Without Cullman's commitment to women's tennis, its future could have taken a less predictable path.

"Joe was very knowledgeable and actually wanted to be a history and English teacher," his brother Edgar Cullman said. "But he went with Philip Morris instead and led the company to be very supportive of tennis."

Cullman's influence in the sport dates to 1962, before Open tennis, when he first convinced Philip Morris to support the efforts of Gladys Heldman, who was trying to save the ailing U.S. National Championships at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills. Cullman and Heldman had become friends when they started playing tennis together during the 1950's at the Century Club in Westchester, N.Y. Cullman was the president of Philip Morris at the time and Heldman was the publisher and editor in chief of *World Tennis* magazine. So when Heldman decided to hire a plane to fly 85 European men and women players to New York, who couldn't afford travel to the U.S. to compete in the tournament, Cullman was the first to write a



Joe Cullman (center) helped establish the Virginia Slims women's pro circuit with Billie Jean King (left) and Gladys Heldman (right).

International Tennis Hall of Fame

Cullman then convinced the board of Philip Morris to sponsor the first US Open at West Side in 1968 and he was instrumental in getting that first Open televised. He was the chairman of the Open in 1969-70, and served as honorary chairman in 1971. "Joe used to take the same seat near the scoreboard off one of the ground courts so he could watch tennis and hold court," the tennis photographer Russ Adams recalled. "He'd say, 'Take a seat, Russ. Let's catch up.' Everybody came up to him. He didn't act like a big deal; he was out there to greet people and see how they were enjoying the show."

In 1970 Cullman etched his name forever in the annals of tennis when he helped Heldman pioneer the women's pro tour by sponsoring what became known as the Virginia Slims Circuit. Every tennis fan knows the story. At the beginning of the Open era, both the men and the women were struggling to establish themselves as professionals. Billie Jean King, one of the top women players, turned to Heldman for help, and together with Cullman they won the battle to set up an

independent women's tour. Heldman arranged for the Houston Racquet Club to hold a tournament that would ultimately offer more prize money than a USLTA-sanctioned event that was scheduled to run simultaneously, along with a men's tournament, in Los Angeles, California. USLTA authorities would only agree to sanction the Houston tournament as an amateur event. Undeterred, Heldman asked nineteen of the top women players - known as the "Houston 9" - to sign 51 contracts with *World Tennis* magazine so that the tournament would qualify as a legitimate pro contest. King confirmed that fact in the following excerpts from her book *Billie Jean*:

"Gladys had...conversations with Joseph Cullman...a tennis nut...[who] said his company would sponsor our tournament...the Virginia Slims Invitational...If we were contract pro the USLTA would have no control over us...Wednesday...eight of us signed...Thursday...We Americans were all suspended by the USLTA."

Richard Evans also documented the historic moment in his book, *Open Tennis*: "...Joe, answering Gladys' call yet again, made his most historic commitment to the game...an immediate agreement to add another \$2,500 to the tournament...Gladys and her team...had put themselves out on a limb and even if Cullman had an outstretched hand...the pressure on the women to prove themselves was tremendous...Billie Jean said later, 'If nobody had come to see us play we would have been dead. But they did come. The timing was right.'"

King noted recently: "Without Joe Cullman women's tennis would not have become what it is today. When Gladys Heldman and Joe gave us an opportunity that pushed us into the world's spotlight, he helped a generation of women find our voice. He gave us a reason to face our challenges head on. When we were fearful, he gave us the confidence to push ahead. He taught us about business and whenever we needed him, he was there."

George Gowen, the general counsel of the USTA at the time, has said, "Gladys Heldman and I were on opposite sides of pretty heavy litigation. The good news is that we negotiated a settlement that combined the two women's tours - the so-called USLTA tour and the Virginia Slims tour..."

By 1972 Cullman was an influential presence in tennis. He signed on as the co-chairman of the first Robert F. Kennedy Pro-Celebrity tennis tournament at West Side, a benefit to help support the activities of the underprivileged youth of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, and then served as general chairman of the event for five years.

There's more. Cullman once said that the things he loved most in life were his family, friends, sports and the outdoors. And in his autobiography, appropriately entitled, *I'm a Lucky Guy*, he wrote, "I suppose that when my obituaries are written they will stress my work at Philip Morris... But a person is more than his work. I consider my efforts at conservation through the World Wildlife Fund, the Atlantic Salmon Foundation and the International Tennis Hall of Fame to have been a most important part of my life."

Indeed, Cullman helped rebuild and restore the International Tennis Hall of Fame (ITHF) site in Newport, R.I., and in 1982 he was named the president of the organization. He served as the ITHF chairman from 1985 to 1989, and in 1990 he was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

"Joe Cullman was the primary force in the restoration and resurgence of the International Tennis Hall of Fame," said Mark Stenning, the organization's chief executive officer. "His formidable influence in the corporate community, along with his passion for tennis, made him the perfect individual to spearhead the project, and the Newport Casino was established as a national historic landmark under his guidance."



Joe Cullman enjoyed greeting everyone at the US Open.

Accolades for Joe Cullman keep pouring in. Neil Amdur, the veteran tennis writer, sports editor of *The New York Times*, publisher/editor in chief of *World Tennis* magazine and tennis producer for CBS television, echoed the consensus: "Joe Cullman was the chairman of the board, in every sense of the word, from board rooms to salmon fishing to

tennis courts to the arts. He loved everything he put his soul into, and tennis became one of those adventures, from women's tennis to the International Tennis Hall of Fame. The notion that a cigarette manufacturer might sponsor a women's tennis tour seemed outrageous in 1970. Before Title IX became a fact of life in American culture, few companies had the faintest notion that women were worth following as athletes, let alone with a sponsorship commitment. Enter Gladys Heldman, a dynamic individualist, publisher and personal friend, who cajoled and convinced Cullman that women's tennis could succeed. Once chairman Joe made up his mind, the rest is history. Not only did Virginia Slims become synonymous with women's tennis, but "You've come a long way, baby" soon was replaced by gender equity, a revolution that changed the American sports landscape forever."

Billie Jean King deserves the final word: "Joe Cullman was one of a kind and his induction into the USTA Eastern Section Hall of Fame is a fitting tribute to his wonderful legacy. Joe's generosity, foresight and his commitment to people from all walks of life did not start and stop with the founders of women's professional tennis. All women athletes will forever be indebted to him for breaking the mold. The International Tennis Hall of Fame thrives today because of his dedication. Joe had many, many great achievements - but his legacy will be that he helped people become leaders - in business, in sports and in life."

"Joe Cullman was a great sportsman, a great businessman and a true mentor. He loved his family and we all loved that about him. Joe was a great man and one of the best friends any one could have."



## JANE BROWN GRIMES

By Nancy Gill McShea

Reading the background of Jane Brown Grimes, one has to be impressed by her many years of off court experience in tennis. She comes across as a savvy CEO playing at the top of her game, which is exactly who she is. This past January, Jane began serving a two-year term as the President and Chairman of the Board of the U.S. Tennis Association (USTA). She previously served on the association's board of directors as the first vice president, director at large and secretary-treasurer.

After an early stint as a reporter and a researcher for *Life* magazine, Jane opted for a career in tennis. She has loved the sport all of her life and has said often that one

of her fondest childhood memories was playing tennis all day, all summer long, on the local tennis courts near her Long Island home. At summer's end, she and her family would hop into the car to go to the U.S. National Championships at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills. They would spend the entire day there watching greats such as Maureen Connolly, Althea Gibson and the famous Aussies.

One of Jane's 16 first cousins said: "Legend in the family has it that Jane's grandparents used to host Jean Borotra, one of the famous French four Musketeers (Jacques Brugnon, Henri Cochet, Rene Lacoste being the other three) in their Long Island home when they were here to play in the national championships... A passion for tennis has always been in the family genes!"

Jane's brother Sam Gillespie remembers well the trips to Forest Hills. "We would wander the grass courts outside the ivy covered stadium to watch the best amateurs of the day practice and compete," he said. "We would often bring our own racquets (wooden of course) and wear whites on the off-chance that one of the competitors might hit some practice balls with us...During those years Jane competed successfully in [mixed doubles] tournaments, except on those occasions when she was paired with her brother...She has always been devoted to the successful evolution of...tennis."

Only Jane knows exactly what triggered her passion for helping to shape the game, but the record shows that in 1977 she opened the New York office of the International Tennis Hall of Fame (ITHF). By 1981, she was named the executive director of the organization.

During her tenure there she functioned as the tournament director for both the ATP and WTA Tour events. From 1986-1991, she served as the managing director of the Women's Tennis Council, after which she returned to the International Hall of Fame as its president and chief executive officer, from 1991-2000. Today she is President Emeritus of the organization.

John Reese, who has served concurrently with Brown Grimes for over 20 years in lofty positions on the ITHF board — most notably, as president/chairman and CEO (Reese), and as president and COO/CEO (Brown Grimes) — described his friend as extraordinary. "The thing about Jane," Reese said, "is that not only has she held prominent positions in tennis for almost 30 years...these are positions that require intelligence and diplomatic skills. Jane understands her audience and can draw them out in a way that no one's feelings are hurt.

Besides those attributes, she has the charm and common sense that any chief executive officer has to have. Not an easy combination and she has it.

"Jane's late husband Charlie Grimes was very supportive of her progression — from the president of the International Tennis Hall of Fame to president of the USTA. He was a wonderful counsel, a real partner and very proud of Jane. Her success was his success."

Mark Stenning, chairman of the International Tennis Hall of Fame, has watched Jane in action and, like Reese, appreciates the range of her administrative abilities. "Jane's legacy at the Hall of Fame is unmatched," Stenning said.

"She joined the organization at a time when funding was in short supply, the buildings were deteriorating in Newport and there was little public awareness. As president, Jane oversaw the renovation and restoration of the historic Newport Casino complex, the creation of a world-class Hall of Fame museum and the formation of a strong and supportive board of directors.

"I have had the privilege of working with Jane for over 25 years and have enjoyed her friendship and counsel. And we are fortunate and grateful that Jane is still involved with the Hall of Fame as our President Emeritus."

Jane will tell anyone who asks that she has always had a racquet in her hand, and still tries to play in two games a week, so it follows that a major priority in her presidency will be to re-energize the schools program. She also plans to create more innovative strategies with the USTA board and committees to increase tennis par-

ticipation among all ages through local community programs, and to make the sport more inclusive and open to everyone.

To meet this grand challenge, Jane has said that she will continue the campaign to support tennis in the parks, as well as all of the other programs, but that her main focus will definitely be the schools. "My dream would be to have tennis be the sport of choice for kids from seven to 12," she has said. "The way we're trying to do that is [by continuing] to introduce tennis in the physical education classes...By far, the number one thing is the tennis in the schools."

Tennis programs build on each other within the tennis progression. Kids go from the school gymnasium to after school programs in the public parks and sign up for Junior Team Tennis. Some players eventually compete on their school teams and in tournaments. To make sure that the tennis progression remains a visible option within communities' sports programs, Jane plans to institute an advocacy task force so that when funds become available for local recreation centers, tennis advocates will be able to lobby in support of public tennis courts. "The swimmers are there, the soccer moms are there and it's time for the tennis players to be there," she said.

Jane also believes strongly in the power of tennis to change lives. She is a member of the board of the Rodney Street Tennis and Tutoring Association, a community tennis association in Wilmington, Delaware, and has said that the children affiliated with the program are truly at-risk kids.

"Some of them come to us from the homeless shelter," she said in a recent interview. "And I can tell you we're making a difference in these kids' lives. Long after I have departed the USTA presidency, I know that I will still be part of this group, because I can honestly see what tennis has brought to these kids in terms of pride and confidence and self respect. It's helped keep them in school and helped them bridge the gap."

Members of Jane's family attest unanimously to her ability to meet challenges — especially in tennis.

"...When Jane was young she decided she was going to win the...tennis championship [at our local courts]," said her cousin Hester Weeden, who played tennis with her during their childhood. "And, in typical fashion, it was a done deal in a blink of an eye. The rest of the family struggled for years to win it and I for one never did. This only confirms what we all know — Jane usually achieves what she sets out to do."

Her cousin, Connie Hildesley, added: "It is no surprise to any of us that Jane is focusing her efforts on tennis for children and advocacy. Many of the

cousins were able to spend summers together growing up in Long Island. Inspired by a local coach, Fred Eisler, we played tennis from dawn to dusk, until the ball was no longer visible and all you could see were the fireflies. Once, when we were on a spring break in Bermuda some professional tennis players were there for an exhibition tournament. Jane had the opportunity to talk with...Pancho Gonzalez, Ken Rosewall and others for as long as they would listen."

Jane's brother Sam remembers the trip well. "...The



Jane Brown Grimes is the Chairman of the Board and President of the U.S. Tennis Association.

newly-turned pros were staying at the same hotel," he said. "...Barry MacKay...had just moved from being a top amateur to a professional...in those days there was no 'open tennis' and the fledgling pro tour was more like a small, traveling corps of prior top flight amateurs playing exhibition matches against each other...Jane spent time listening to those players talk about their aspirations of what the game could become..."

"But there was another strong call for Jane during these teenage years, and that was sailing. While our mother set an example for us as a good competitor...tennis player, our father was a passionate racer of sailboats (and sails his own boat to this day). He recognized in Jane the ability and dexterity required to do the deck work on his 32-foot Atlantic class sailboat. This required balancing precariously on a wet, slanted deck in high seas, setting a massive spinnaker with spinnaker pole while rounding a mark in close quarters with other racing boats. Our father in almost every circumstance I can recall is the most mild-mannered gentleman I know; however, in the course of these heated races he took on a wholly different personality. I think Jane's ability to withstand the elements, the pressure and the yelling while coolly performing each challenging task on the deck of that ship has stood her well in the tests she has faced in life since then."



# DONALD RUBELL

By Nancy Gill McShea

Trying to keep pace with Don Rubell as he expounds on his changing lifestyle in the diverse roles of amateur tennis champion, mathematician, prominent New York physician, hotel proprietor and world-renowned contemporary art collector – all while he's busy pursuing these passions en route to California from Florida, to New York, Ireland, Berlin, Washington and back again—makes one's head spin.

Several constants define Rubell. The tone of his quick, dry sense of humor suggests that he's an empathetic guy. His family is all-important, so he and the entire Rubell clan promote the family's ventures together. He credits his wife Mera for "attempting to teach me everything I did not know...but that may be a lost cause." And striving for excellence on the tennis court has been an intricate part of the Rubell family lifestyle for four generations.

In addition to Don's credentials, his father Phil was once a runner up in the over-90 world tennis championships; his brother Steve played No. 1 for Syracuse University; his son Jason was an All-American and the ACC singles champ while at Duke; and his four grandchildren are now learning the game.

Phil Rubell taught his son to play tennis at age 6 at Lincoln Terrace Park in Brooklyn. By the mid-1950's, Don was a student at Wingate High School in Brooklyn and led his team to victory at the New York City Tennis Championships. He represented Eastern in the national Tilton Bowl team competition, ranked among the country's top ten juniors and was a repeat winner in Eastern boys' 15 and 18 tournaments. He admits, though, that he lost, 6-0, 6-0, in the first round of the first two events he entered and once choked away a 6-0, 5-0 lead while playing Steve Green at the national junior indoors.

He attended Cornell University, where he played first singles and was the captain of the tennis team. He was also twice the Eastern Intercollegiate tennis champ, lost only once in a dual match – to Donald Dell of Yale – and was the president of the Cornell Mathematics Society.

"I always liked tennis and mathematics," Rubell said. "Guess I was only half a nerd. "As for my tennis game, I will talk about anything but my forehand. It's still a work in progress."

He graduated from Cornell in 1961, took a job as an actuary with Metropolitan Life and played the East-

ern men's open circuit. He later enrolled in medical school at New York University and completed his ObGyn residency there. During those educational years he confined his tennis to the East but competed in the U.S. National Championships at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills and at the Eastern Grass Courts in South Orange, N.J. He won singles titles at the New York State, the Eastern Hard Courts and Clay Courts and ranked third in the East behind Gene Scott and Herb Fitz Gibbon, followed by Richard Raskind (now Renee Richards) and Bob Barker.

"Those rankings were representative of the era, said Richards, who recently uncovered tennis records among her late father's papers. "Most of that group was ranked in the top ten for ten years."

From 1973 to 1975, Rubell was a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force Medical Corps, a member of the Air Force tennis team and won the U.S. Military Interservice Championships. From 1975 to 1999, he practiced ObGyn in New York City and also chaired the Gynecology Department at the Cabrini Medical Center, lectured at the Beth Israel Medical Center, was an assistant professor at the N.Y.U. School of Medicine and was named several times among New York magazine's list of best doctors in New York. During those years he won the USTA and Eastern men's 45 Clay Courts and represented the U.S. in the Dabler Cup and in team competition versus South America.

In Rubell's early N.Y.U. days, Richards was in residency training at the Lenox Hill and Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospitals and the pair escaped often to the tennis courts during lunch breaks. "I'd pick Don up at the Midtown Tunnel and he'd be standing there in his whites," Richards has said. "We'd go to Queens, find a court and then go back to the hospital...Sometimes we'd go up to Baker field at Columbia and play with Dick Savitt, Ham Richardson and Paul Cranis."

"Don started out as a little guy and learned a retrieving, defensive game, but when he was 21 he grew to 6-foot-3 and developed a big serve and volley. He learned that he could win points quicker than what and his backhand became great. Bobby Riggs once said that Don's backhand was like [Pancho] Gonzalez."

Rubell has described some memorable victories and losses, a few with his amusing slant: Wins — 1. beat future U.S. Davis Cup player Allen Fox in a 4-hour junior match, 15-13 in the third, after Fox tried to default at 7-all; 2. defeated Vitas Gerulaitis at the 7th Regiment Armory Indoors. Scheduled to play Vitas on lightning fast wood and intimidated by his incredible reflexes and volleys, Don figured "my best chance was

to arrange for unlimited tickets the night before at Studio 54. It worked brilliantly. I don't think Vitas woke up before the next to last game of the match;" 3. prevailed over Dick Stockton at the N.Y. State Indoors the first time they played. Next time out, Stockton had switched to the T-2000. Don was barely able to see the ball and never beat him again; 4. routed Tim Coss, reputed to be the world's steadiest player, at the Eastern Clay Courts. Don's father said that if Don could beat Coss at his own game from the get-go it could disconcert him. The first point lasted 174 shots before Coss missed; Don won the match easily.

Every player can relate to No. 5, when Rubell, at 15, upset the veteran Sid Schwartz. "Sid just banged



Don and Mera Rubell (l-r) and family are world-renowned art collectors.

every ball for a winner," he said. "It was not until the middle of the second set that Sid realized most of his shots were missing. I figured if I did not say anything, he might forget he was losing...everybody who was watching also thought Sid was winning. After the match, Sid walked to the net post, systematically broke all of his racquets and threatened to give up tennis forever."

In other wins, Rubell beat both Butch Seewagen and Sandy Mayer at the New York State Championships and once edged Tony Vincent in the finals of the Eastern Men's Clay Courts in Hackensack. Richards was there and recalled the match: "They were both steady baseliners, clay court experts, so it was a grueling contest. After four hours, Tony went up 5-1 in the fifth set. The tournament committee figured the match was over...they brought out a table, put a white cloth and the winner's silver cup on it and placed it next to the umpire's stand. Don, usually a placid man, looked at it and got mad. He suddenly started serving and volleying and won six games in a row to win the match."

Don included three good losses – "It's an oxymoron, I know," he said: 1. lost to Butch Buchholz at Perth Amboy, 9-7 in the third; 2. surrendered to Larry Nagler 3 times in one week, due to rainouts. Don figured it was probably a world record; he had match point in the third match and decided not to ruin the world record; and 3. lost to Wimbledon and Australian singles champ Alex Olmedo at the South Orange Grass Courts. "It was my best tournament," said Rubell, who upset 3 seeded

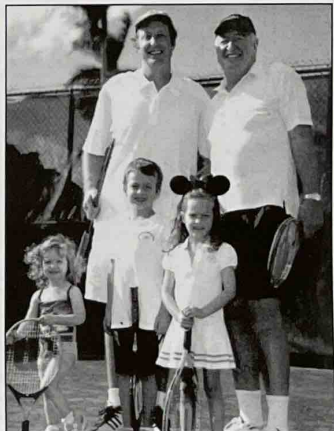
players and played Olmedo in the semis. "It was one of the first televised matches. Somehow, I was up a break and 4-3 in the first set. On the change-over, I tripped on the TV wire, looked up to find myself staring at the TV camera and never won another game."

By the early 1990's, Don and Mera decided to enter the hotel business in partnership with their children, Jason and Jennifer, and to focus on their extensive art collection in Florida. "We wanted to work together as a family, to pool our talents," said Rubell, who for five years endured the New York/Florida weekend commute until he retired in 1999 from his medical practice. "Mera and I have collected art together since we were married 42 years ago and the kids have been involved in the process since they were about 13. Now we collect as a family."

The art collection, open to the public, is housed in the 140,000-foot Rubell Family Collection Museum in Miami and contains over 5,000 works, which are exhibited on a rotating basis. During the past year, the museum has hosted over 40,000 visitors.

The collection is so well known, in fact, that the Art Review has named Rubell 29th on a list of the 100 most important people in the art world and the collection itself as the fifth most important in the world. Don Rubell has been listed among the most influential people in the art world by *Art & Auction* magazine, *Art News*, *Basel Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, among others.

Not a bad lifestyle and pretty good credentials for a guy who started out liking tennis and mathematics and labeled himself only half a nerd.



Tennis is ingrained in the Rubell family lifestyle: (Back, l-r) Jason and Don; (front, l-r) Olivia, Samuel and Ella.