

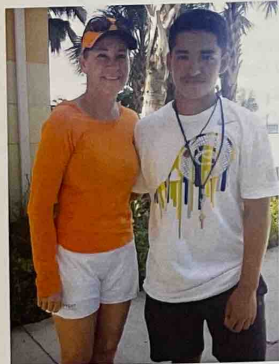


26th Annual Eastern
Tennis Hall of Fame Celebration
to benefit the
Junior Tennis Foundation
Grant and Scholarship
Programs

Dinkins Scholarship Winners Train at Evert Tennis Academy

The David N. Dinkins Scholarship Awards are presented annually to two young New York City juniors with strong leadership potential who are both academically motivated and athletically talented. The awards, which were created in 1990 in honor of former New York City Mayor Dinkins, provide each junior with a one-week scholarship to the Evert Tennis Academy in Boca Raton, Florida, and free travel by Delta Airlines, courtesy of USTA Travel.

The Academy is led by Chris Evert, tennis legend and winner of 18 Grand Slam titles, and John Evert, internationally renowned coach and Academy Director. Both work to develop athletes through a careful balance of technical, tactical, mental and physical training. The pristine grounds, state-of-the-art equipment, caring staff and family atmosphere combine to make the academy a beautiful and unique training environment.



Leonardo Escudero, winner of 2012 Dinkins Scholarship Award, with tennis legend Chris Evert.

Ethan Nittolo, who won the Dinkins Scholarship Award in 2011, described his experience as follows: "The coaches there had experience training top kids from around the world. I was grateful that I had the chance to work with them. I loved being able to play tennis all day and I became friends with kids from all over the world."

2013 David N. Dinkins Scholarship Award Winners

Steffi Margret Antao



Steffi Margret Antao is a sixth grader at New Hyde Park Road School in Long Island.

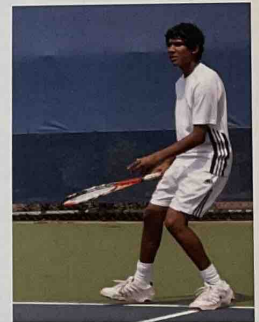
Steffi started playing tennis when she was five years old at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing. In 2009, she was selected to be a part of New York Junior Tennis and Learning's Advanced Training program. She has been a member of NYJTL ever since.

Steffi also excels in school. With math as her favorite subject, she is an A+ student.

In her spare time, Steffi enjoys playing soccer, skiing and swimming. On the weekends, she volunteers and helps at the local church altar service. Her long term goal is to play on a Division I college team and become a professional tennis player.

Kyran Somar

Kyran Somar is a sophomore at Riverdale Country School in the Bronx. For the past six years, he has been a participant in the free citywide tennis program run by the City Parks Foundation (CPF), where he has been praised for his regular attendance and commitment to improving his competitive skills. For the past two years, he was selected by his coaches to participate in CPF's annual Chase Aces Tournament for intermediate-level players. Kyran is currently a member of his high school's junior varsity team, which posted an undefeated record last year.



Kyran is also an accomplished student with a 3.3 GPA. His favorite subject is math because it forces him to think outside the box. In addition to tennis, Kyran runs varsity cross country and finished in the top 10 at the NYC Mayor's Cup Championship last year in Van Cortlandt Park.

Steve Ross



More than 40 years ago, Brooklyn's Steve Ross became a local tennis legend with deadly slices, spin and speed and without the most important stroke in today's game: a powerful serve.

Known as "The Brooklyn Backboard," Ross's defensive skills and cunning tactics frustrated his opponents, helping him win countless tournaments and defeat numerous Eastern tennis stars including Bobby Riggs, King Van Nostrand and Peter Fleming.

"I didn't serve the ball hard, but I could hit the ball on a quarter," said Ross. "I would keep my opponent going all day. You had

to overpower me, and with the wooden racquets, it was hard to overpower people."

Ross's determination had developed in Miami Beach, where as a young child, he lost his mom to leukemia and grew up in a broken home. It was on his way home from school one day that he saw some empty tennis courts. He and a friend collected empty soda bottles to rent the court for 25 cents an hour, and used their background in table tennis to learn the game.



In 1968, Ross warming up before a match at the Hiway tennis court in Brooklyn.

"We enjoyed playing, but we didn't know what we were doing," said Ross. "We chopped the ball, we sliced the ball and we kind of played ping pong on the tennis court."

Ross moved to Brooklyn a few years later to care for his grandmother, and found a job at a supermarket. After work, he would go to the nearby Hiway Tennis Club to watch people play.

Club owner Lenny Hartman offered Ross free use of the courts in exchange for maintaining them. Ross took the offer, and before long was defeating players one after another. One of those who lost to Ross was Dick Scheer, who had little trouble finding opponents after taking one of three sets from him in the late 1960s.



Ross teaching a lesson at Mill Basin Health and Racquet Club.

"Steve made my reputation at the Hiway courts," said Scheer. "I always admired him. Not only was he a great competitor, but he was always a gentleman. After he beat you, he'd tell you how great you played."

Ross got his big break a few years later, when Hartman set up a match between the

"Brooklyn Backboard" and Bobby Riggs. Ross outplayed Riggs in a series of sets, earning a story in the *New York Times* and more than \$700 in prize money from the notorious gambler. Ross's life was changed forever.

"I started to play doubles matches with Bobby for money," said Ross. "And Bobby introduced me to Jack Dreyfus of the Dreyfus Fund who would pay me to play with him. It was through Lenny, Bobby and Jack that I was able to make a living doing what I loved: playing and teaching tennis."

Ross dominated the Eastern clay court circuit from 1969 to 1974, and credits his longtime friend and practice partner Alan Polen with helping him stay sharp. But Ross was also an outstanding tennis instructor, who still teaches today at Mill Basin Health and Racquet Club in Brooklyn. His most significant accomplishment, in addition to having arguably more tournament wins than anyone in the section, was that he instilled the love of tennis in so many young people.

Among his nominations for the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame was a letter from Laurie Edelman, who worked as the Program Director at Camp Idylwold in Schroon Lake, N.Y. when Ross ran the tennis program there.

"Each year, we have an informal camp reunion at the US Open on the first day of the tournament," wrote Edelman. "I suspect that most of them come because Steve Ross will be there and they know they will continue to learn something about the game (and have fun) if they sit with him while watching the pros play."

Marina Nudo

It was on the red clay courts of Bologna, Italy that Marina Nudo learned to play tennis as a child.

But it was as a parent in Rochester, New York that the longtime Eastern volunteer began to leave her mark on the sport.

Her 11 year old son loved tennis, but could not find local tournaments to play. So, in an act that would become characteristic of Nudo's lifelong dedication to the sport, she saw the shot and didn't hesitate.

"I called a couple of coaches at the University of Rochester and asked for their help to make the draw," said Nudo. "We came up with a schedule, and I ran the tournament all by myself."

It was as a tournament director that Marina got her start, and with the help of parent volunteers, she ran monthly tournaments throughout the Rochester area for 19 years. But she quickly developed a passion for helping grow the sport on a wider scale. With Spike Gonzalez, a teaching pro at Midtown Tennis Club in Rochester, she helped develop Love 15, a program that introduced tennis to children at parks and schools throughout the city.



From L to R: Kay and John P. McEnroe, Marina Nudo and Dan Dwyer at a Davis Cup event.

The program continues today at the YMCA of Rochester. It is a USTA National Junior Tennis and Learning center, blending tennis instruction and play with lessons in reading, leadership and team-building.

"My reward was from the children, especially the little ones," said Nudo. "When they got to play tennis, they were just gleaming."

Nudo became a leader of the Eastern Tennis Association (now USTA Eastern) when she was elected Vice President of the Western Region. Of her many accomplishments, perhaps her biggest was helping support the staff, assisting then-Eastern employee Laura Canfield introduce tennis to schools in Western New York.

"She was my Rochester connection and was extremely influential," said Canfield, who currently serves on the Junior Tennis Foundation Board. "She made a zillion different introductions for me that made it much easier to grow tennis in the region."



From L to R: Arnie and Suzie Lanzilotta and Ken and Marina Nudo attending a past Eastern Hall of Fame celebration.

When elected President of the Eastern Tennis Association in 1996, Marina helped Eastern tennis clubs become certified as USTA Area Training Centers. These centers brought High Performance training to juniors throughout the section and preceded what are known today as USTA Regional Training Centers. These RTCs are working with USTA Player Development to develop the next generation of American tennis champions.

Still, no matter how much Marina accomplished on the section level, she always remembered where she found herself in tennis.

"She was a very gracious lady and represented the section well," said former Eastern Executive Director, Doris Herrick. "But she never forgot her roots in the Rochester area and her loyalties to those children she introduced to a tennis racquet."

Justin Gimelstob



Justin with runner-up Jan Michael Gambill, Easter Bowl Boys 14s, 1991.

moved to the Centercourt junior program headed by Asim Sengun in Chatham, N.J., to take his game to the next level. It didn't take long before Sengun realized the potential of the new player he had in his program.

"He was extremely competitive," Sengun said. "He was very smart on the court, had great court sense, and his strokes were so efficient. His mental toughness was apparent right away, and his work ethic was second to none. All the things you want from a kid he had, so it was very obvious from an early age that he was going to be a great player."

Gimelstob excelled as a junior, reaching the No. 1 ranking in each age division – the 12s, 14s, 16s and 18s – as well as winning the U.S. National Boys' 18s singles title and reaching the Roland Garros doubles final in 1995.

His career continued to flourish in college and as a pro. At UCLA, he earned All-America honors and won the NCAA Doubles title. Then, after turning pro following his freshman year, he enjoyed a successful career on the ATP Tour from 1996-2000, capturing 13 career doubles titles and two Grand Slam mixed doubles championships at the Australian Open and Roland Garros, both with Venus Williams, in 1998.

After retiring in 2007, Justin used his passion for tennis to develop a second career as a broadcaster for The Tennis Channel. But despite his

When Justin Gimelstob began playing tennis at age 7, he wasn't interested in hitting forehands down the line. He liked to swing for the fences.

So his first coach Steve Diamond would send Justin off the court until he learned to keep his power under control. Before long, he got the hang of it, and then there was no stopping him.

"I just picked it up and got better and better," Gimelstob said. "And the atmosphere at the courts was fun and competitive, pushing you to be the best you could be. It became an extended family."

After working with Diamond for a year and then playing at the West Orange Tennis Club, Justin, along with his two brothers, who also played tennis,

success on court and in front of the camera, his accomplishments behind the scenes are what bring him the most pride.

Since 1998, the Justin Gimelstob Children's Fund has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to benefit children in need. The Valerie Fund, for children with cancer and blood disorders, is the main beneficiary of the money raised. The foundation also supports other charities of many of the ATP tennis pros on and off the tour, as well as the Eastern Section's junior competition programs.

"I would say that the foundation is something that he is most passionate about," said Carol Smith (Magnes), who works closely with Gimelstob to coordinate all of the charity events for his foundation. "Justin works tirelessly for the kids. We have gone to The Valerie Fund to see the children. He has sat with them, talked with them and read to them."

Gimelstob, who will become a father for the first time with wife Cary in September, said of giving back, "I'm very fortunate to have enjoyed a successful tennis career, but there is no greater joy I have than being able to use that success to help others. The foundation is a passion of mine and one which I plan to continue to grow for many years to come."



Celebrating a place in the finals, Newport, RI 2006.
Photo By Elise Armendol

representation of the beginning of his career and where it all started," said Russell Gimelstob, Justin's younger brother who is introducing him at the induction ceremony. "We all have really fond memories of the ETA, and it means a lot to our family that the place where we all started and learned the game is now honoring his career."

From player to broadcaster to his work with the foundation and now as an inductee into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame, Gimelstob's life in tennis has come full circle, and being honored by the section where it all began means so much to him and his family.

"The idea that he's being inducted into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame is very special because it's really a