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Hall of



Fame 2002



ALEX. B. AITCHISON

By Nancy Gill McShea

If you were involved in junior tennis in any capacity during the 1970's and 1980's, and especially if you spent any time at the Port Washington Tennis Academy on Long Island, you remember that everybody was jockeying for position to curry favor with Alex. Aitchison.

During that time frame, which coincided with the tennis boom in New York, Aitchison was one of a handful of the game's administrators who elevated the status of junior tennis in this country and around the world. He was the chairman

and chief executive officer of the Port Academy, and in 1977 he founded and directed the famous Rolex International Junior Championships there. At the same time, he was an influential officer of the Eastern Tennis Association, serving as the section's president in 1982 and '83, and before that, as the vice president. He was also the chairman of both the ETA and USTA Junior Tennis Councils and was the first person commissioned to formulate plans for a national junior development program and training center.

He was the right person for the job. Not only did he fit the poster image of a proper tennis official,

looking crisp and dignified in his navy blazer while doing Rolex TV commentary alongside John Barrett, the BBC's voice of Wimbledon, but he also had that unhurried manner any executive strives for, particularly one who's directing a frenetic junior tennis tournament.

Aitchison's frame of reference growing up in his native Australia prepared him for the role. He began playing tennis in the early 1940's at age 9 in Essendon, a suburb of Melbourne, where he says "there were public tennis courts on every corner just like there are gas stations here."

He gained international experience as an Australian player, yet admits, with a twinkle in his eye, that he moved into sports promotion "when it was decided that I was not going to do anything brilliant [on the court]." Then in 1971, when he was working as the chief administrator of the Lawn Tennis Association of Victoria, which conducted the Australian Open, his friend, the great Australian coach Harry Hopman, called and asked him to join him at the Port Academy as the manager.

Aitchison, then 41, and his wife Marjorie arrived in the U.S. with their three children—Perry, Grant and Scott—and the whole family became involved in tennis. Alex. and the boys were all ranked Eastern players and Marjorie

worked side by side with her husband at every tournament he directed. They had such a high profile that in 1987 the Aitchison family was honored as Eastern's "Tennis Family of the Year" and in 1992 Alex. received the "Tennis Man of the Year" award.

"Alex. is handsome, charming, and with his Australian accent, he could have been the pied piper of women's league tennis," says his friend Doris Herrick, who worked closely with Aitchison during her tenure as Eastern's executive director. "Instead, he was the consummate administrator of our junior effort, setting us up to rank as one of the elite junior programs in the country."

He was also a member of more than 13 USTA national committees and the administrator, tournament director and/or chairman of a host of adult and junior competitive events, including several USTA Satellite Circuits: Avon, American Express and Lionel, among them (1972-'78); the 21-and-under World and Amateur Championships; the Girls' 12, 14, 16 National Championships; the U.S. Olympic National Sports Festival and Olympic Trials; and the U.S. Open qualifying tournament.



Tournament director Alex. Aitchison awards prize to Eastern standout Gene Mayer, who was later ranked No. 4 in the world.

Courtesy of the Port Washington Tennis Academy

"I've worked with juniors all my life, but I've also had some exciting stuff happen with adults," says Aitchison, who today runs adult league programs. He worked with Ivan Lendl on forehand stroke technique and with Martina Navratilova on fitness when he was president of the tennis division of the S.T.A.R.T. program—an acronym for sports technique and reaction training—when both players were ranked No. 1 in the world.

"I've always appreciated the opportunity to help players, both adults and juniors, to achieve their goals, whatever they may be—a U.S. Open champion or a happy social player."

But junior tennis has been his legacy. With Aitchison at the helm from '77 to 1986, the Rolex Championships thrived at Port, becoming the most famous and largest indoor junior tennis tournament in the world. Most Eastern juniors played the Rolex just for the unique experience of competing against someone from a foreign country. At the same time they had the rare opportunity of watching future greats such as Andrea Jaeger, Tracy Austin, Goran Ivanisevic, Stefan Edberg, Mats Wilander, Ivan Lendl and New Yorkers Molly Van Nostrand, Paul Annacone and Kathleen Horvath, among others, play on their home turf.

So it was no surprise when USTA President Randy Gregson appointed Aitchison in May of 1985 as the personal consultant to the president and a special committee to establish a player development program in the United States. He recalls that Gregson asked him if the U.S. needed a player development program and his response was, "Good God, yes, what took you so long...Here we are the greatest

tennis country in the world and places like Canada, Sweden and Czechoslovakia have development programs and we don't. I said to Randy, 'I have a job,' and he said, 'Well, leave it.'"



The Aitchisons were ETA Tennis Family of the Year in 1987. (L to R) Grant, Scott, Marjorie, Alex. and Perry.

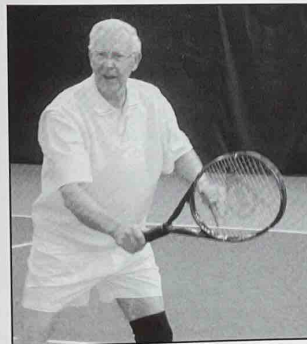
Bob Kraus

Together, they mapped out a plan, wrote a basic formal program and submitted it to the USTA Board, which approved it. The idea was to establish one national facility in a climate where the weather would be conducive to year-round play, and four regional facilities that would

feed into it. To expand further, each section would have its own development program so that there would be a real follow through, all the way through from the grass roots to the national level with the purpose of feeding into the national system.

Aitchison left his job at Port and traveled around the U.S. for a year looking for potential sites. "The system works," he says. "We now have a wonderful facility at Key Biscayne. And I feel very proud of the part I played in getting it off the ground. I knew how to approach it because of my experience in Australia and had every confidence that we could deliver..."

He was also the first general chairman of this Hall of Fame dinner in 1988. "I thought it was a wonderful idea then, and still do, to recognize the people who perform a service to the game in the East," he says. Now it's your year, Alex. Congratulations!



Alex. Aitchison in action.

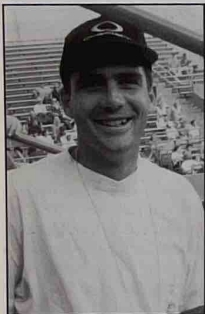
PAUL ANNAcone

By Nancy Gill McShea

Paul Annacone has had more live, on-camera TV closeups while coaching Pete Sampras than any celebrity who ever appeared on CNN's "Larry King Live" show. He's no publicity hound, though. He has always appeared incognito in the players' box, hiding out behind sunglasses and his trademark navy baseball cap.

It's not that he was trying to elude the paparazzi. He was just trying to quietly soak in

the historic atmosphere and urge Sampras on. "It was an amazing seven years. I got to coach and live a close-knit life with the best player of all time and watch him win eight Grand Slam titles," says Annacone, still awed by the fact that when Sampras beat Patrick Rafter in the 2000



Nancy Gill McShea

Paul Annacone favors his trademark navy baseball cap.

Wimbledon final to win his record 13th title, he couldn't walk very well, never warmed up and just went out and played. "That was the most amazing accomplishment...!"

Annacone's childhood friend Jon Grossman explains that while Paul is also very competitive—don't even think about toying with him on the golf course if you're "athletically challenged like I am," he says, laughing—he is really a low-key guy with a self-deprecating sense of humor. What you see is what you get.

The power brokers in the tennis business recognize Annacone's worthy character traits and are equally impressed by his credentials. They point out that because he is still in his late thirties and already accomplished in four high-profile areas of tennis—he was the top-ranked collegiate player in the country, the 12th ranked professional player in the world and a member of the ATP Tour Board and the vice president of

the Player Council before he was Sampras's coach—he is the ideal person to head up the new USA Tennis High Performance program, a support system for America's top prospects.

"Paul is a leader who knows what it takes to succeed at the highest levels of tennis...his experience will be key to programs that support the development of young players into American champions," USTA Executive Director Rick Ferman has said.

Annacone is excited by the challenge. "Here I am, I think of myself as a small town guy and I have the opportunity to have a significant impact on the structure and philosophy of American tennis at the highest level," he says. "It's what I've lived for the last 25 years."

Twenty-five years ago, Annacone was a 14-year-old ranked junior player out of East Hampton, N.Y., who decided to pursue a career in tennis. He moved to Florida to train at Nick Bollettieri's Tennis Academy and then went on to star at the University of Tennessee. He changed his whole game, switching from wood to an oversize racket, and at the suggestion of his brother Steve and college coach, Mike DePalmer, adopted an unusual chip-and-charge mode on his opponent's second shot, which most players wouldn't even attempt. He was a three-time All-American at Tennessee, in 1982, '83 and in 1984, when he lost just two matches all year and was ranked first in the country. That June at Wimbledon, he came through the men's singles qualifier and went all the way to the quarters before losing to Jimmy Connors.

Between 1984 and 1994, he won 17 professional titles in singles and doubles and was a finalist 22 times, even though he spent some time on the sidelines recuperating from a couple of minor surgeries. He excelled at doubles, winning a Grand Slam title at the 1985 Australian Open and reaching the semis in '87. He was also a semifinalist at Wimbledon in 1986, a finalist at the 1990 U.S. Open and a semifinalist in '89.

U.S. Davis Cup Captain Patrick McEnroe recalls that he and Annacone might have won the 1988 U.S. Open doubles title—they were a game away from defeating the eventual champs, Sergio Casal and Emilio Sanchez—when McEnroe choked. "I served for the match at 5-4 in the fifth set, choked it away, and we lost like 8-6," he says. "Paul really held me up. He really mentored me. I thought of him almost as a big brother with a slightly different approach [on the court] from my real big brother in tennis. We

were both from New York and very few of us made it all the way to the pros."

Paul has a different take on that match. "Patrick didn't choke it away, we were a team," he says.

Annacone is partial to three victories that he's probably already stored among his highlight films. The first was a 1986 Davis Cup match between the U.S. and Australia in Brisbane. Ken Flach and Paul were partners. "We beat John Fitzgerald and Pat Cash, 8-10, 1-6, 7-5, 13-11, 9-7, in a marathon that lasted over two days," he says, recounting the score precisely without skipping a beat.

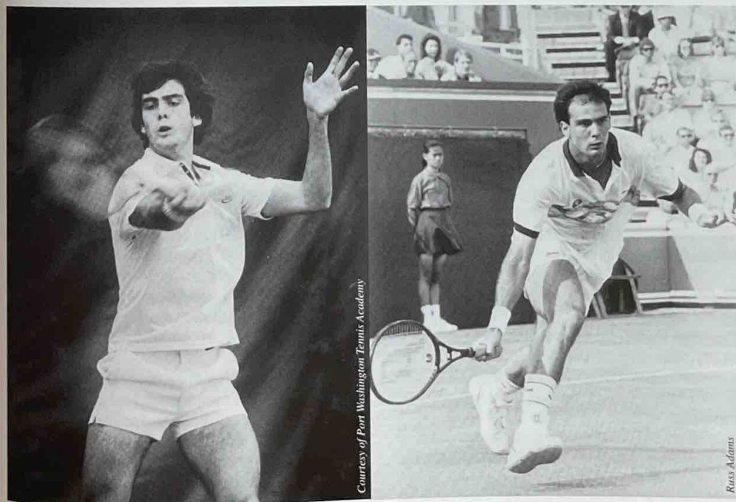
His second favorite memory took place at the 1985 Los Angeles Open, where he pulled out a 7-6, 6-7, 7-6 barnburner to defeat Stefan Edberg and win the singles title. Paul's father, Dominic, who watched the whole match on a satellite dish, still sounds nervous when discussing it, as though it had occurred last week.

Annacone's third highlight film unfolded at the USTA National Tennis Center on opening day of the 1986 U.S. Open, when he upset John McEnroe in five sets in Louis Armstrong Stadium. Paul was already an accomplished professional at the time, but fans kept milling around

the grounds and circling back to check out the big scoreboard outside the stadium in astonishment. That match put Paul on the map in Queens and secured his legacy in Eastern's history scrapbook. Whenever he played the Open during the rest of his career, Eastern fans packed the stands to cheer him on.

Yet Annacone's final legacy could well be as a natural teacher, as he goes about the task of grooming future U.S. tennis champions. His friend Grossman says, "I am a mediocre golfer at best, yet Paul continues to encourage me to become better...The last time we played, I beat him by a few strokes for the first time ever (his neck was injured but he stuck it out anyway, making fun of himself over every errant shot). At the end of the round he turned to me and said, 'Ah grasshopper, the student has become the teacher.' That made my year."

Pete Sampras sums it up: "I want to congratulate you, Paul, on an accomplishment you definitely deserve. You are one of the best coaches around our game. I owe you a thank you for all the things you have taught me and wish you the best in your future. You're a great friend and a great teacher. Thanks for all our wonderful years together."



Courtesy of Port Washington Tennis Academy

Russ Adams

Paul Annacone initiated action on the court throughout his tennis career.

KATHLEEN HORVATH

By Nancy Gill McShea

Kathleen Horvath qualifies as the ultimate professional. Within the last two decades, she has been ranked among the world's top ten professional tennis players, graduated magna cum laude with bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business, and is currently a vice president at Goldman, Sachs, specializing in private wealth management.

She values her tennis career as a stepping stone, as a successful experience that gave her confidence. "It's like a do-over," she says. "It's fun when you have wisdom from something that you can apply to something new. You start with the work ethic and discipline and get the analytical tools to back up the tennis."

Horvath began scripting her guide on "how to succeed" in the early summer of 1973 at the tender age of 8 when she lost to the top seed, 6-3, 6-1, in the first round of a Girls' 12 tournament at the Poughkeepsie Tennis Club.

"I was devastated. It was my first tournament and I barely knew how to keep score," she recalls, summoning an instant replay of the painful experience. Her father said afterward that if she wanted to win she would have to practice. And practice she did, all day, all summer, often serving 10 buckets of balls at a clip. At summer's end, in a season-ending interclub match, Kathleen defeated the same girl she had lost to earlier in the summer. Not only that, she defeated her in the rubber match to clinch victory for her team.

"I was the hero of the day and I was hooked," she says.

She began to hit regularly with Garry Vander Veer, a philosophy professor at Vassar and a top club player, who encouraged her. She also signed up for lessons with Kit Byron at Rye Racquet in the winter and at the Old Oaks Country Club in the summer. "Kit was my first true coach, he was very selfless and taught me a lot," she says.

"Kathy Horvath was a big-time Eastern player; nobody ever came close to her. She put the Rye Racquet Club on the map in the 1970's as a center for the development of world class juniors, and me along with it as a

pro who was capable of training them," says Byron, a young teaching pro in his twenties at the time. "Her distinguishing characteristic? When she had you on the ropes, she instinctively came in, cut off the court and volleyed the ball into the open area rather than wait for an error.

"She was so dedicated she would play all day, all summer long. In the evening, I'd be



Kathleen Horvath, 13, planned strategy with her coach Kit Byron at the 1978 Eastern Claycourts.

closing the club pro shop, it would be dark, and I'd hear thump, thump, thump. She'd be out there, so tired, but still pounding balls against the backboard...I'd take the racquet out of her hand and remind her that there's always tomorrow."

Kathleen admits that she worked hard and was really dedicated, explaining that she inherited the strong work ethic and courage from her parents, who emigrated to this country under difficult circumstances. Her mother, Erika, escaped from East Germany and her father, Andrew, fled from Hungary during the 1956 revolution. They shared with her an appreciation of the arts and introduced her to the usual childhood activities of swimming, ballet and tennis, but she gravitated to tennis, she says, because it is "more measurable" than other sports.

She earned her first national 12s ranking by age 10 and zoomed to the No. 4 spot the following year. Andrea Jaeger and Susan Mascarin were her contemporaries, yet Kathleen is the only player who has won all four USTA national junior claycourt age group titles in consecutive years. At 13 she was the country's top-ranked singles and doubles

player in the Girls' 16s division. That same year, she won the national 21-and-under singles title and a wild card into the U.S. Open qualifier. She became the youngest player to qualify for the Open, a record that still stands.

As a result, she was privileged to play her first pro tournament on her home turf at the 1979 U.S. Open on her 14th birthday, and the next day she and Bjorn Borg were pictured hitting forehands on the front page of *The New York Times*.

She turned pro at 15, played U.S. Fed Cup, was an Olympic quarterfinalist and in 1984 was ranked No. 10 in the world. She won eight pro titles, including the Ginny Championships Tournament of Champions in Honolulu, defeating Carling Bassett 7-6 in a third-set final. She was also a finalist in six pro events and was twice a singles quarterfinalist at the French Championships, the first time in 1983 after she snapped Martina Navratilova's 84-match win streak in the round of 16.

Bud Collins recorded the dramatic encounter in his *Tennis Encyclopedia*: "...Martina Navratilova and Kathy Horvath shared a court in Paris...In retrospect, it may have been the most significant match of the year...it was something special. Navratilova had won her first 36 matches of 1983 before meeting the teenager...A former child prodigy...Horvath had been runner-up to Chris Evert in the German Open the previous week...But nothing prepared her for what happened at Stade Roland Garros... The unseeded American... posted a stunning 6-4, 0-6, 6-3 victory." She became the star of every TV sports highlight film and gained instant celebrity around the world.

Chris Evert says: "Kathleen was a great competitor with a fiery determination and she knew how to win. Mentally, she was one of the strongest in our era. She fought hard...and never gave up. When she was away from the

court, though, she was very fun loving and happy."

By the spring of 1989, Kathleen was 23 years old and ready to write the second chapter of her life. After she lost in the first round of the Bausch and Lomb in Amelia Island, Fla., she noticed a few pros doing wind-sprints in the darkness and decided right then and there to retire. She called her father and told him she was going back to school. She asked her friend Professor Vander



Goldman, Sachs Vice President Kathleen Horvath.

Veer for advice and he encouraged her to look at the Ivy Leagues and play up the tennis experience. Despite interrupting her formal education at 15 and completing high school through correspondence courses, she scored 1300 on the S.A.T.'s and was accepted at Penn.

She returned to New York after graduation and took a job in institutional sales with Merrill-Lynch. She asked people where the best place was to do private banking, and when everybody said Goldman, Sachs, it became her first choice.

"I've been pretty lucky in terms of things I set out to accomplish," she says. "Like having kids, I wanted both boys and girls." Kathleen Horvath and her husband, Phil Fresen, are the proud parents of Erika, 3, and 18-month-old twin boys, Andy and R.J.



At 17, Kathleen Horvath was ranked 10th in the world.

ROBERT RYLAND

By Nancy Gill McShea

Bob Ryland shows only a few signs of slowing down, even though he will turn 82 this June. He is a survivor and an optimist. He still teaches tennis to children a couple of times a week with his friends Arvelia Myers and Leslie Allen, he laughs easily and often, and speaks cheerfully when reminiscing about his unique, 70-year tour of the world's tennis courts.

Ryland was the first African-American to play professional tennis, the first to compete in the NCAA National Championships, the first to lead his team to the small college national championships as a player-coach and



Bob Ryland (l), pictured with his father and twin brother in the early 1920's.

the first to play at the exclusive Los Angeles Tennis Club. In addition, he has literally won hundreds of tournaments; coached some of the world's top-ranked professionals, including Harold Solomon, Renee Blount and Allen; and taught tennis to celebrities Barbra Streisand, Bill Cosby, Tony Bennett, Mike Wallace and Eartha Kitt at the Midtown Tennis Club in Manhattan, where he worked from 1963 to 1990.

"Bob's name would have been right up there with the great players of his time—Lew Hoad, Pancho Gonzalez, Bobby Riggs and Don Budge, among others—had he not been born a black man in America in the 1920's," says Allen, a Ryland protege who was ranked

17th in the world in the early 1980's. "Still, he endured and succeeded in a sport that was not inviting. We can appreciate his accomplishments and for generations to come learn from his experiences."

Remarkably, Ryland maintains a calm demeanor even when he recalls indignities such as being hauled into police stations and ordered to fork over \$300, just because he was driving a Cadillac, or being forced to sneak in and out of back doors to compete in collegiate tennis matches. He emphasizes that those experiences paled compared to the shock of regularly seeing people of color strung up on trees during his childhood in Mobile, Alabama.

He explains that when you witness that kind of horror or feel the jolt of a policeman pulling you into harm's way for no reason, living with fear becomes a way of life. "You're scared to death, but you have no choice, you just go through it," he says, without any anger in his voice.

After his mother, Gussie, and twin brother, Joe, died of pneumonia in 1920 when he was a baby, his father, Robert, sent him from his Chicago home to live with his grandmother in Mobile. While there, he helped pick cotton for the family with his great grandfather, who had been a slave.

He returned to Chicago at age ten and began playing tennis with his father in public parks. From the early 1930's until the late 1950's, when he began establishing a career as a highly respected teaching professional, he won tournaments throughout the country and was twice the ATA national singles champ and three times the runner-up, all while attending to other aspects of his life.

In 1939 when he was a student at Tilden Tech High School, he won both the Illinois State and junior ATA singles titles and received a scholarship to Xavier University, a black school in New Orleans. "The nuns bought us a station wagon and the five of us [teammates] would travel all over the country playing," he has said.

He did a stint in the U.S. Army from 1941 to 1945 and still managed to play tournaments and exhibitions with players the calibre of Alice Marble, Mary Hardwick and Dr. Reggie Weir at tennis meccas such as the Cosmopolitan Club in Harlem. In 1946 he took to the



Bob Ryland at the U.S. Open.

road again, won public parks events in New Jersey and New York and was awarded another tennis scholarship, this time to Wayne University in Detroit. He competed against the country's top players from Big 10 schools such as Purdue and Notre Dame and that year broke the color barrier at the NCAA National Championships, advancing to the semifinals of singles before losing to USC's Bob Falkenberg. He was later inducted into the university's Hall of Fame.

He took another sabbatical from school in 1947 and headed for California, where he worked nights in the post office and played tennis with Pancho Gonzalez during the day. He broke another barrier at the Los Angeles Tennis Club, losing in the Pacific Southwest Championships there, 6-4, 7-5, to the country's No. 1 player Ham Richardson. (It would be five years before another black, Arthur Ashe, was permitted to play there.)

In 1954 Tennessee AA&I in Nashville offered Ryland a scholarship to be the player-coach, and he twice led his team to the small college national championships with the help of his New York recruits Vernon Morgan and Billy Davis. When asked if he could beat Davis, Bob laughs and says: "Billy is a good player but he never beat me. He claims he beat me for ice cream but I don't remember that."

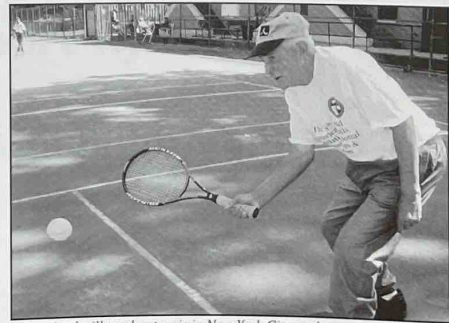
Ryland left Tennessee with his bachelor's degree, came to New York and qualified for the 1955 U.S. Championships at Forest Hills.

He took a job as the physical education director of the YMCA in

Montclair, N.J., but in 1957 decided to teach tennis and joined the U.S. Professional (Lawn) Tennis Association. The tennis promoter Jack March asked him to play on the World Pro Tour with the likes of Hoad, Gonzalez, Budge and Rod Laver. March said: "Bob Ryland—there's another thing I originated. I had the first black player ever playing a pro tournament. They were barred in those days. But I said I don't give a damn. I told the press and they said 'good.'"

In the early 1960's Ryland taught tennis to Harold Solomon, the Kennedys and Robert MacNamara at the St. Alban's Country Club in Washington, D.C., before he settled in at Midtown in Manhattan. In 1973 the comedian Bill Cosby asked him to accompany him around the world so Cosby could improve his game. And a decade later, Leslie Allen asked him to tour Europe with her while she was playing the women's pro circuit. "Bob built the foundation for my game, he was always a constant, a guiding force in my life," she says. "He took me from a teenager dreaming about the pros right to center court at Wimbledon."

Bob Ryland long ago adopted a philosophical view of his heritage as the son of an African-American mother and an Irish-Indian father. "When you're part black and part white you can deal better with prejudice," he concludes. "You know what black is and you know what white is. You know everybody's the same. But you don't understand that unless you have to deal with the reality of racism."



Bob Ryland still teaches tennis in New York City parks.