



HIGH FIVE

For the past three decades, *COLORADO TENNIS* (née *High Bounce* in 1977) has been bringing you profiles of local players, coaches, administrators and anyone else in the Colorado tennis community who shares their passion for the sport with others.

In each issue, we are profiling five individuals who deserve recognition for their efforts and accomplishments. As always, some you will know, while others will be fresh names and faces.

As always, we encourage readers to help us recognize others who they think deserve special recognition. Email Kurt Desautels <kurt@coloradotennis.com> with your comments or suggestions.

There are people in life who make it their mission to make a positive difference in the lives of others. One of those impressive individuals is Wayne Emerick, a founder of The Denver Urban Youth Tennis Academy, which provides under-served, inner-city children (7-19) the opportunity to receive high performance training for competitive teams. Up to 56 players are selected to receive high-level training, clothing, equipment, and scholarships to offset tournament entry fees.

Wayne's love of tennis began in upstate New York in the sixth grade, when he decided to trade his baseball bat for a tennis racquet – developing basic



photos courtesy of Wayne Emerick

WAYNE EMERICK

Story by **KATIE NEWELL**



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tennis skills on a city park with red clay courts. It was quite the contrast from the cold, white playground where Wayne's passion for alpine skiing was also growing and thriving.

It didn't take very long for Wayne to excel at tennis, however, and he became captain of the Shaker High School Tennis Team in Latham, NY. Making the team at Dartmouth (he graduated from there and then went onto Cornell University Johnson School of Management for his MBA), Wayne was still pulled in two directions, and missed much of the tennis season as a member of the ski team. The tennis seed was firmly planted, though, and Wayne has developed a very impressive resumé.

Wayne is a USTA Tennis High Performance Coach, having been Head Coach of the USTA Albany Competition Training Center for 14 years. He was Head Men and Women's Tennis Coach at Union College in Schenectady, NY, from 2003-05 and was Head Men's Coach at Colorado College in 2008. Wayne has also spent a decade off the court, working for ESPN and Sports Software as a statistical match analyst at ATP Tour Events.

So, what drives this former USTA Eastern Coach of the Year and two-time USPTA Eastern High School Coach of the Year to invest his time in a program like The Denver Academy <DENVERURBANYOUTHENNIS.org>?

"I've always felt that all kids who want to play at a competitive level should have access to high level coaching," Wayne explains. "And this program is for those kids, the ones who otherwise wouldn't have the access, the ones who want to excel, play competitively, through high school and hopefully into college."

Wayne adds that the program is a cooperative effort of Denver Parks & Recreation and City Park Racquet Club, with support from local organizations like USTA Colorado. "It's the commitment of local professionals like Tobias Ortegon, Frank Adams and Sue Burke that make this program succeed," he explains.

"The ultimate goal is to make the program self-sustaining," says Wayne who knows from past experience how to get the job done. "I am a strong believer that you have to have good players involved in order to attract strong players and grow the program." By increasing the time they can get on the court, and having access to the type of tennis professionals these young players have, that's just the type of players that will be thriving in the program for many years to come. ☺