



# HIGH FIVE

profiles by  
**KATIENEWELL**

For the past 35 years, *Colorado Tennis* (née *High Bounce* in 1976) 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.

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.

**T**here's some serious smiling going on at the **Ricardo Flores Magón Academy** (RFMA) these days, just check out the beaming faces of tough netters Leonardo Carrillo, Kenneth Velez, and Jose Rodriguez who just captured the USTA Colorado Boys 10IB Colorado State Junior Tennis Championship.

But the success of this school isn't limited to what's happened on the tennis courts. Founded seven years ago by USTA Colorado committee member Marcos Martinez, now Head of School, the existence of the academy was fueled by his belief that our community needed to provide a better educational opportunity for its residents. More than 90% of the students at the academy receive free/reduced lunch, 80% are English language learners, and 95% are students of color. More often than not, when they enter the Academy, they are 1-3 grade levels below where they should be, says Martinez.



Photo courtesy of Ricardo Flores Magon Academy

## R.F.MAGONACADEMY

including over the fall, winter and summer breaks. It's the hard work by everyone that is making such a difference at the school.

Carrillo, Velez, and Rodriguez were honored with a special assembly in honor of their tennis accomplishments. What's even more amazing about these boys winning is they currently don't even have real tennis courts and play on concrete slabs. When asked what qualities these boys had that helped them to the top Martinez explains, "We found that if a kid wants it bad enough, it doesn't matter if they have the background or not. These kids love tennis. They live it, breathe it. It's just part of their lives."

Martinez is grateful for the support the academy has received but says there is still a huge need for additional equipment with the ultimate prize being tennis courts for the school. With teachers and administration devoting so much time to the success of the academy, there just isn't much time to fundraise. If anyone is interested in donating to the school in the hopes of having tennis courts in the future, please contact Martinez directly at [marcos@magonacademy.com](mailto:marcos@magonacademy.com).

**T**here are some little netters at the Eastside Tennis Association who are getting some time with someone pretty special. **Cenea Kemp** is bringing her tennis talent, her time, and her passion for helping others in the community, specifically the 5 and under crowd. A past recipient of the USTA Colorado Parks & Recreation Junior Player of the Year (2004), Cenea is paying it forward by helping out the kids in the public park system the way she was helped out as a youngster.

Cenea just graduated from CSU (magna cum laude), and is currently applying to medical schools and studying for her MCATs. She attributes her success in college in part to tennis. "It means a lot to me. It gave me something good to do with my time, and it gave me focus." She said she originally went in hating science, but wanting to be a veterinarian. Now loving science, she plans to be either a pediatrician, or an OB-GYN.

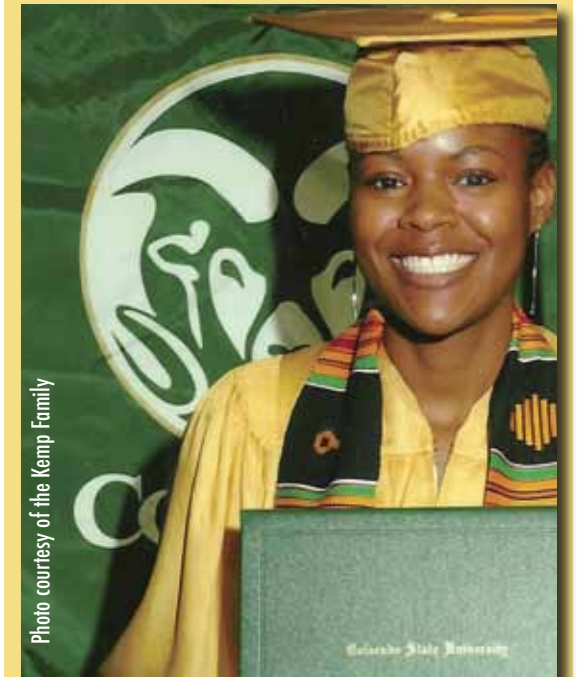


Photo courtesy of the Kemp Family

## CENEAKEMP

A strong family support system behind her, it was actually her aunt, Jessie Walker-Smith that gave her the tennis instruction to become a good tennis player (she played #3 doubles at George Washington High School her freshman and sophomore year, and then #3 singles her junior and senior year.) Cenea also is truly grateful for the commitment her mother, Helen Kemp, made to get to her practices and games; taking time off work to make sure Cenea had the best opportunity. Her brother, Dexter, and her other aunt, Ella Hart, have also been behind her.

Cenea said that she didn't do as well in high school academically as she would have liked to, but jokes that "my last tennis match was the best match of my life!" She said that she set the goal for herself as soon as she got to college to be magna cum laude, and kept that big goal in front of her all the time, even when she didn't feel like studying. "I knew I had to reach my goal," she explained.

As far as tennis in the future? Cenea is interested in potentially playing in a league, but for now it's helping "anyone and everyone," who can benefit from her time and passion.