

2017 ALTHEA GIBSON LEADERSHIP GRANT

August 25, 1927 – September 28, 2003

Athlete, Pioneer, Legend

About Althea Gibson

Althea Gibson was the daughter of sharecroppers who was born in South Carolina, and raised in Harlem, NY. A child who lived on welfare, Gibson ran away from home frequently. Despite her troubled youth, she still managed to excel in athletics. Gibson exceeded normal expectations in golf, basketball, tennis, horsemanship and paddle tennis. Gibson even toured with the Harlem Globetrotters as a basketball player! Dr. Walter “Whirlwind” Johnson, a Lynchburg, VA physician who was a pioneer in the black tennis community, was instrumental in her tennis training.

Gibson won the first of 10 consecutive national championships run by the American Tennis Association in 1947. This was the only American tennis tournament circuit that would allow Gibson to play, since the USTA did not allow people of color in any sanctioned events at that time. In 1953, she graduated from Florida A&M, an opportunity provided by tennis and basketball scholarships. She then moved to Missouri to become an athletic instructor at a local university.

In 1956 Gibson won her first Grand Slam title, the Doubles Championships at the French Open. Her partner was a Jewish Englishwoman, named Angela Buxton. The two faced mountains of discrimination and challenges while touring together: Buxton for her religion, and Gibson for her color. With this historic win, Gibson was then allowed to play in USTA events, called the USLTA, and all other Grand Slams. That same year the dynamic duo won the same title at Wimbledon. In 1957 she lost in the Australian Open finals, but won the Wimbledon and US Championships in singles, officially breaking the color barrier. In fact, Gibson won the singles title in 1957 and 1958 in both countries.

In her retirement, Gibson became a singer, appeared in a few motion pictures, she wrote her autobiography and was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

Gibson died in 2003 at the age of 76. She was honored on the Opening night of the 2007 US Open by the USTA, celebrating the 50th Anniversary of her win. She was also inducted in the Court of Champions. Gibson rose from a troubled childhood, overcame an impoverished upbringing, dedicated herself to excellence and succeeded in sport and in the classroom. She is a woman to be honored, remembered and admired. Althea Gibson: a woman who could have played the victim, but chose the positive pathway of hard work and determination to make her mark on tennis, and Americans of her era and yours.

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Objectives and Requirements

OBJECTIVES:

1. Honor the memory, life, and achievements of an exceptional pioneer who paved the way for millions.
2. Reward junior tennis players who work to excel in leading others on and off the court.
3. Widen the net of opportunity to young diverse players who aspire to excellence in competitive tennis.
4. Demonstrate the USTA resolve and commitment to multicultural participation in tennis.

REQUIREMENTS:

- For consideration the applicant must be:
 1. A United States Citizen
 2. An African-American female
 3. Between the ages of 12-18 years old.
- The applicant must have a **grade point average of 3.0** or higher.
- One copy of **official school transcript** (or home school transcript) is required.
- One Letter of Recommendation about the applicant's leadership ability is required.
- A recent photograph of the applicant is required.
- Applicant must submit a brief, type-written essay stating how they embody the tenacity, courage, and leadership qualities demonstrated by Althea Gibson.

ONE GRANT WILL BE AWARDED per year in the amount of \$750, for training expenses*.

*Training expenses include, but are not limited to, developmental training, coaching, facility usage, equipment, apparel, supplies, travel and room/board.

**2017 ALTHEA GIBSON LEADERSHIP GRANT
Application**

CONFIDENTIAL (To be completed by parents if under 18)

First Name: _____ **Last Name:** _____ **Age:** _____
Address: _____ **City:** _____ **ST:** _____ **Zip:** _____
Cell Phone :(_____) _____ **E-mail Address*:** _____
Date of Birth: _____ (*MM/DD/YY*) **USTA Section:** _____
Current Grade Point Average: _____
Male _____ **Female** _____

Race/Ethnicity

African-American/Black (Not Hispanic or Latino): _____

Identified by two or more races: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian #1: _____
Address: _____ **City:** _____ **ST:** _____ **Zip:** _____
Cell Phone :(_____) _____ **E-mail Address*:** _____

Parent/Legal Guardian #2: _____
Address: _____ **City:** _____ **ST:** _____ **Zip:** _____
Cell Phone :(_____) _____ **E-mail Address*:** _____

Personal Coach (if any): _____ **Academy:** _____
Address: _____ **City:** _____ **ST:** _____ **Zip:** _____
Cell Phone :(_____) _____ **E-mail Address*:** _____

Please note:

- Email addresses shall not be used for any other purpose unless we receive consent from the applicant or from his/her legal guardian.
- Decisions will be announced in March 2017.

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Supporting Documents and Signature

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

1. A completed W-9 form with the **applicant's** current address and Social Security number must be included with the application.
2. A brief type-written essay telling the USTA how you embody the tenacity, courage, and leadership qualities demonstrated by Althea Gibson.
3. A copy of your high school transcript. Transcript copies must include school, school's address, school's phone number, official letterhead or emblem of the school, information key defining school's grading system.
4. ONE (1) Letter of Recommendation commenting on your **leadership ability** from any of the following:
 - a. High school principal
 - b. High school guidance counselor
 - c. High school teacher of a core academic class (gym/ art/ music teachers are not included)
 - d. Part-time job employer
 - e. City, county, or state elected official
 - f. Religious leader
 - g. Community leader (non-relative)

***APPLICATIONS MISSING ANY OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ATTACHMENTS WILL BE IMMEDIATELY DISQUALIFIED AND WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**

SIGNATURE:

I hereby certify that the information submitted above is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that all information is subject to verification by the USTA Diversity & Inclusion Department as a condition of awarding funds.

Applicant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Legal Guardian #1 Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Legal Guardian #2 Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please scan and email ONE COPY of the application along with the essay and supporting documents no later than January 20, 2016 to:

Essay_G.p8twjpz83cv7db8m@u.box.com