

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TENNIS ASSOCIATION SENIOR NEWS

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National Championships Featured

Mark Winters

Southern California showcases National Senior Championships during the spring and summer. The season kicks off at the La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club, which many consider the home of gold ball events. William (Bill) J. Kellogg, who served as the Tournament Director for both the National Women's 50-90 Hard Court Championships and the Men's 60-85 Hard Court Championships, (in which he played Men's 60 singles and doubles), reported, "The month of May always brings great tennis to La Jolla in the form of the National Women's Hard Court Championships, where the competitive age groups range from 50-90 in ten-year age increments. Players come from all over the country; even some from overseas, such as 92-year-old Helene Salvetat of France, who played in both the 80 and 90 divisions. The annual tournament is made more special by the inclusion of a Southern California Tennis Association sanctioned men's competition featuring players between the ages of 60 and 80 (in five-year increments). For many, the tournaments, the competitiveness aside, also serve as great vacations."

Kellogg continued, "La Jolla has almost never seen such hot weather. Temperatures consistently exceeded 90 degrees. The month of May is normally a bit overcast, but not this year. The intense heat produced numerous wildfires, in locations all around San Diego, shutting down the freeways and making life difficult for everyone. However, that did not stop the tournament from moving ahead. As you could expect, conditioning played a big part in the results, with a few singles matches lasting more than four hours."



Tournament Director, Bill Kellogg, Tracy Houk, Ros Nideffer and La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club Director of Tennis, Conan Lorenzo

Beginning with the youngest age group, he said, "The Women's 50 singles draw was filled with great players. Three of the four semifinalists were past winners, but it was a seasoned veteran from the pro circuit who prevailed. Ros Fairbanks Nideffer dominated the competition. Only one player, Fran Chandler, got as many as four games off of her in one set. Finalist, Tracy Houk, had a tougher time of it, having battled past Eleanor (Ellie) Hammargren 7-5, 6-2 in the quarters, then she pulled a miracle comeback from 5-2 down in the third set in a grueling four and a half-hour match to squeak past Judy Newman to reach the final. However, the semifinal war of attrition took its toll on Houk and made it tough for her to keep up with her fresher opponent in the trophy round. Chandler outlasted Newman, in another three set battle, to take third place.

"The Women's 50 Doubles draw was filled with fantastic teams, but none of the top four seeds reached the final. Robin Harris and Judy Newman were the top seeds, but fell in the semi-finals to Hammargren and Jennifer Lyons in another grueling three set contest. Meanwhile, on the other side of the draw, Una Davis and Lucia Romanov-Stark ousted the second seeded team of Mary Dailey and Erika Smith in the other semifinal, also in a three set duel. Hammargren and Lyons came away with the title, while Harris and Newman took third place

over Karen Haas and Tracy Worley-Hagan.

"The Women's 60 was filled with three former winners: Tina Karwasky, Martha Downing and Sherri Bronson. However, when the dust settled, there was no doubt that the top player was Tina Karwasky who yielded three games to her opponents in the entire tournament. She took down Martha Downing, 6-1, 6-0 in the final to prove why she was the top seed and No. 1 player in the world. Sherri Bronson



Una Davis, Lucia Romanov-Stark, Lorenzo, Eleanor Hammargren and Jennifer Lyons

earned third place with a solid 6-4, 6-4 win over Rita Giles.

“In the Women’s 60 Doubles, Karwasky and Ann Stanley were the heavy favorites, but they were upset by the second seeded team, Kathy Bennett and Downing, in yet another three set duel, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.



Kathy Bennett, Martha Downing, Lorenzo, Tina Karwasky and Ann Stanley

“The Women’s 70 Singles had a very strong field, but Cathy Anderson, the defending champion, was dominant. Seeded second, she has always done very well in La Jolla so it wasn’t surprising that Anderson raced to the final, losing only two games along the way. Top seed, Charleen Hillebrand, had a much tougher time as she battled through each round of the tournament. Initially, the final was closely contested, but after Anderson won the first set Tie-Break, Hillebrand retired trailing 3-2 in the second set. It appeared that the long week of tough matches, and the extreme heat took their toll on Hillebrand. Ann Hunt took third place, in what was the tournament standard, a three set victory over Sheila Weinstock.

“In the Women’s 70 Doubles, Hillebrand recovered to take the title with long-time partner, Suella Steel. They were severe-

ly challenged in the semis by Doris DeVries and Roz King, but they survived a three set confrontation and went on to dominate Jane Pang and Anne Russ, 6-2, 6-1, in the final. Hunt and Weinstock bested DeVries and King for third place.”

Kellogg continued, “The Women’s 80 singles division was an ‘all Texas’ affair. Mary Lynch raced through the draw without facing a serious challenge, and met Margaret Canby in the final. Lynch was too strong for her fellow



Helene Salvetat and Joyce Vanderpol

Texan and prevailed 6-0, 6-2. In the playoff round, Doris Lutz rebounded from losing the first set 6-0 to Anneke Balics and came storming back to win in a Match Tie-Break.



Jane Buffington, Bev Winans, Kellogg, Margaret Canby and Angel Ray

the singles and doubles in 2014. Joyce Vanderpol took the singles title in convincing fashion over Helene Salvetat, the challenger from France. Then newcomers to the division, Betty Cookson and Phyllis Adler, joined forces to take the gold ball over Lucille Trefzger and Vanderpol.”

The ultimate host, Kellogg went on to say, “The tournament provided great hospitality for the players and their guests with both a beach social on Wednesday night, and an elegant cocktail reception Friday evening. During the other days of the tournament, players took advantage of the nightly happy hour in the Club Bar. In spite of the intense heat, the camaraderie was exceptional, and everyone had a great time enjoying some of the best May beach weather in recent memory.”

As is always the case, the competitive level evidenced at the annual La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club Men’s 60-85 Hard Court



Suella Steel, Charleen Hillebrand, Lorenzo, Jane Pang and Anne Russ



Larry Belinsky, Bob Wright, Lorenzo, Kellogg and John Holladay

“Last year, the Women’s 90 singles could not be held, due to a lack of participants. However, the ‘rebuilding’ event was able to hold both

Championships was National Championships caliber worthy. Kellogg, not only served as the tournament director for both championships, his on-court performance was formidable. He was a 7-5, 6-0 finalist to Rollin Rhone in the Men’s 60s. In the contest for doubles honors, Larry

Belinsky and Bob Wright escaped with a 7-6, 3-6, 7-6 victory over John Holladay and Kellogg.

James Upton claimed the Men's 65 crown defeating Felix Ponte 5-7, 6-3, 6-3. Dean Corley and Frank Zebot took the doubles, downing Dennis Bowers and Jess Torres 6-2, 6-4. Danny Dabby, in another dramatic three setter, stopped Karel Placek, 6-3, 0-6, 6-3, in the Men's 70 final. Corley added to his La Jolla trophy collec-

similarly brilliant in the Men's 85 trophy round, winning 6-2, 6-1.

Chris Ramsower-Pearlstein teamed with Andi Polisky to organize the 3rd Mission Hills Senior Women's Grass Court Championships, a Category II tournament, (at the facility of the same name), in Rancho Mirage.

Mai Ichikawa-Abel overwhelmed Victoria Libin 6-0, 6-0 in the Women's 40 final. Darice Carnaje and Monica Sweet were

similarly strong, earning a 6-0, 6-4 victory over Christina Markey and Erin Nevin for the doubles championship. Erin Nevin didn't have to hit a ball in the Women's 45 contest, picking up a walkover against Vicki Cosio, who was unable to play.

Tai Sisson followed the "in control" trend defeating Manuela Andrews 6-2, 6-4 for

on the short end of her Women's 65 singles encounter with Janet Watanabe, 6-2, 6-4, but teamed with Andi Polisky to slip past Liane Bryson and Maricaye Daniels, 7-5, 6-4 to earn the doubles trophy.

Lynn Little, who always plays well at the Grass Courts, continued her trophy winning, downing Burnett Herrick 6-2, 6-1 in the Women's 70 final. Polisky made another trip to the winner's circle when she and Roz King downed Doris DeVries and Claudia Giacomini, 6-0, 6-3 for doubles honors.

The mixed doubles competition adds to the tournament's uniqueness. Robert Simmons and Monica Sweet were the Mixed 80 winners, 6-4, 6-3 over Trang Huynh and Phong Nghiem. In the Mixed 100 title round, Darice Carnaje and Brad Hasper edged Brent Abel and Mai Ichikawa-Abel, 2-6, 6-2, 6-2. David Kane and Elyse Rabinowitz, in another exciting contest, slipped past Kent Autrey and Penelope Dam for Mixed 120 honors, 6-4, 6-7, 7-6. Stephen Field and Jocelyn Nolan proved to be 7-6, 7-6 better than Ken and Maria Girard in the Mixed 140 final.

Ned Buckman was the Tournament Director of the National Men's 75-90 Verne Hughes Memorial Hard Court Championships, played at the Laguna Woods Tennis Club.

Les Sack outlasted Robert Quall 7-5, 3-4, Retired in the final Men's 75 contest. Hank Leichtfried and George Sarantos showed why they are one of the best doubles teams playing, defeating Thomas Brunkow and Lenny Lindborg, 6-0, 6-1 in the doubles final. Neil Hurlbut claimed the Men's 80 title, 6-3, 6-3, over George McCabe. As good as Leichtfried and

Sarantos are in the 75s, Richard (Dick) Doss and John Powless are as strong in the 80s as their 6-2, 6-4 victory over Roger Hing and Saul Snyder proved.

Stuart Robinson was solid, defeating Clem Hopp, 6-1, 6-3 in the Men's 85 final. The same can be said of the performance by Wayne Hippenstiel and Graydon Nichols who captured the doubles with a 6-3, 6-4 decision over Richard Eitel and Hugh Stewart. In a marathon outing, Bob Seymour stopped Yutaka Kobayashi, 7-5, 6-7, 11-9, in the Men's 90 title round, but his opponent teamed with Norman Walter to defeat George Druliner and Eddie Tyler,



Jess Torres, Dennis Bowers, Lorenzo, Dean Corley and Frank Zebot

tion, teaming with George Sarantos to score a 7-5, 6-2 decision over George Balch and Lenny Lindborg in the doubles final.

Three sets was the theme so Jerry Singer went the distance in the Men's 75 title round to win 1-6, 6-2, 6-4 over Larry Nielson. Sarantos matched Corley, playing with Lindborg, to collect a 6-1, 6-7, 6-2 victory in the doubles title round over Bob Duesler and William Ulmer. Maurice Altshuler dominated David Evans in the Men's 80 final securing a 6-1, 6-0 win. Wally Vickery was



George Balch, Lenny Lindborg, Kellogg, Corley and George Sarantos



Jerry Singer, Lorenzo and Larry Nielson

Women's 50 honors. Karin Huebner and Gretchen Rush proved that they still had game, earning a 6-3, 6-2 victory against Julie David and Prentiss Van Den Berg in the doubles final. Tracey Thompson was 6-0, 6-2 strong against Mary Firek in a Women's 55 performance. Kathy Barnes and Sue Sprague claimed the doubles 6-1, 7-5 over Pamela Morrow and Mona Redman. Judy Louie ended up

6-4, 6-2, for the doubles trophy.

Tom O'Brien was responsible for the National Father & Daughter, Senior, Super, Ultra Senior & Mother & Son Hard Court Championships that took place at the Barnes Tennis Center in San Diego.

Greg and Jessica Failla passed a 6-4, 5-7, 6-1 test in the Father & Daughter final against Gerrit and Shene Disbergen. Lisa Naumu and Miles Seemann did the same, taking the Mother & Son title, 2-6, 7-6, 7-6, over Carolyn Dadian-Bernhardt and Christopher Bernhardt. In another "went the distance" spectacular, John and Hannah Holladay gained a 6-3, 1-6, 7-5 over Jerry and Becky Morses-Karzen in the Senior Father & Daughter final. Herm Ahlers and Krista O'Connor won the Super Senior Father & Daughter, 7-6, 6-4, over Bob and Danielle Ouwendijk. Graydon and Carolyn Nichols continued to be superior in Father 80 & Daughter play, defeating Enver Mehmedbasich and Susan Wright, 7-6, 6-3.



Brett and Jerry Morse-Karzen with Chris and Kevin Kearney
Photo Kathy Settles

Paul Settles was the Tournament Director of the National Senior, Super Senior, Ultra Senior Father & Son Hard Court Championships, played at the Biszantz Family Tennis Center on the campus of Claremont-Mudd-Scripps, where he is the coach of the men's tennis team.

Chris and Kevin Kearney claimed the Senior Father & Son with a 3-6, 7-5, 6-3 victory over Jerry and Brett Morse-Karzen. As Alan Croll explained, "Bobby (Robert) and I just won the Super Senior Fa-

ther & Son. It was a gold for the Crolls and we are thrilled." In the final, they defeated John and Brad Freer, 6-3, 6-2. Rafael and Rafael Nieto were the Father 80 & Son champions, downed Lawrence and Jeffrey Snow, 6-2, 6-2.

Settles said, "This is the second year that the Biszantz Family Tennis Center at Claremont McKenna College hosted the tournament, and thirty-five teams, representing fourteen different states, were in the quest for a coveted National Championship Gold Ball. After the last match had been played, it was impressive to see that teams from Southern California had prevailed in each division."

The outstanding level of play aside, the championships benefitted the community. "The tournament

also raised funds, through sponsorship partners, for an initiative called 'Tennis in Our Schools,'" Settles added. "The After-School and Physical Education enrichment program, introduced in 2013, is offered to students, in kindergarten through sixth grade, at the seven elementary schools in Claremont. Each school receives a USTA membership that includes teacher training, program curriculum, and on-going staff support. The schools also receive the necessary equipment: portable

nets, rackets, balls and court lines to ensure that they have everything needed to



John and Brad Freer with Robert (Bobby) and Alan Croll
Photo Kathy Settles

provide students with a fun, safe and easy-to-learn tennis program throughout the academic year."

The National Men's 45 Hard Court Championships, a Category I event, was held at the Westlake Tennis & Swim Club. Val Wilder turned the tournament into his own show, winning the singles 6-2, 6-4



Rafael and Rafael Nieto with Jeff and Larry Snow
Photo Kathy Settles

over Max King, and the doubles, with his long-time partner Mike Fedderly, 6-2, 6-2 against Bob Delgado and Bruce Totten.

Scott Spearman organized the National Men's 65 & 70 Hard Court Championships, a Category I tournament, at the Racquet Club of Irvine. In the 65s, it was all Brian Cheney. He downed Mike Dahm 6-1, 6-2 for the singles championship, and with Dan Bohannon, triumphed 6-3, 6-1 over Hugh Burris and Charles Marold for doubles honors. Jimmy Parker followed the "getting it done" competitive script, earning the Men's 70 trophy, with a 6-1, 6-4 decision over Fred Drilling, and joining Ken Robinson for a 6-3, 6-2 win against George Balch and George Sarantos.

Tournament Director, Larry Mousouris admitted, "The 2014 National Men's 50 Hard Court Championships, a Category I tournament held at the Santa Barbara Tennis Club, set new standards. This was the fourteenth annual event that is now known as the Ted Smyth National Men's 50. The draw featured 74 singles and 20 doubles entries.

"The competitive field was deeper and stronger than ever before. The singles final featured two newcomers to the division, and made for a nice east versus west confrontation. At the end of the day, Peter Smith was too much for the field. He defeated Ken White of Buffalo New York, 6-2, 7-5 in the singles final. He teamed

with Mark Wooldridge to down Ross Hessler and Jon Tyrell, 7-6, 6-4. Smith did not lose a singles or doubles set during the tourney. It was a fantastic week that continued a fantastic year for the USC men's coach. Smith's team captured its fifth NCAA crown in the past six years this spring, then he added two gold balls and prize money to his Santa Barbara playing resume.



Peter Smith and Mark Wooldridge

Photo Michael Weinstein

"Tom Kong, last year's finalist, was the third place winner, defeating Pierre Mareschal, 7-5, 7-5."

The Santa Barbara event brought the curtain down on the local National Championships showcase until the National Men's 55 Hard Court Championships, a Category I tournament, takes place at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in early November.

Fotre, Freeman Ellis, Gerry, Oki, Pham & Turley Will Be Missed

This spring and summer, Southern California tennis took a page from life and said good-bye to an eclectic group of individuals who made the local game special. Those who left people remembering them distinctly, included Vincent (Vince) Fotre, Mona Freeman Ellis, Pete Gerry, Rick Oki, Thuan Pham and Harold Turley.



Vincent (Vince) Fotre

Vince Fotre, a 2012 Southern California Tennis Association Senior Hall of Fame inductee, developed his game at the Beverly Hills Tennis Club after moving to the section from Chicago as a teenager. He attended UCLA, and in 1944 was the captain of the men's team. Following his service in the Navy, he became a distinguished writer for Warner Brothers Studio, earning a host of movie credits. He added to his status by producing a collection of television series scripts. Fotre also produced "Night of the Witches." His resume isn't complete without mentioning he acted, playing a tennis player (of course) in the movie "Strangers on a Train." And as if he wasn't busy enough, he wrote a book about the game called, "Why You Lose at Tennis."

As he did with his scripts, Fotre always came up with the goods whether he was playing on the sectional, national or international level. Topping his list of accom-

plishments was winning the International Tennis Federation Men's 75 singles in 2000. As long-time friend, Bart Bowen said of Fotre, who passed away in early August, "He was one of the most interesting men in the world... He had a wonderful life and was a gift to all of us." And, the statement was no exaggeration.



Mona Freeman Ellis

Photo 10sBalls.com

Mona Freeman Ellis was a star, not only in the movie industry, but in tennis circles, too. Tiny, (barely five feet tall), she was dynamic using her glamorous looks, a wonderful ability to deliver lines, along with a mischievous sense of humor, to captivate situations. As a teenager she was a model, and as a 14-year-old was named New York City's first "Miss Subways." As good as she was in a rich career of roles including "Streets of Laredo," "Till We Meet Again," "Junior Miss," "Dear Ruth," "Dear Wife" and "Dear Brat" in the 1940s and '50s, she was equally adept in planning, choreographing might say it better, afternoon tennis gatherings in and around Beverly Hills. It didn't matter if it was umpiring a game played by the Honorable Robert Kelleher, the late former SCTA and USTA President, who brought about Open Tennis, and his friends, as 10sBalls.com noted, "She loved

tennis. Loved it. Her brother played at Yale, not on the team, but up there as she would say. She played whenever possible when on location.

"She was part of the 'Paramount Crew' that ran out of the studio gates and down and across the street to the Los Angeles Tennis Club to watch the Pacific Southwest. It was everyone's favorite week of the year.

"Freeman, when she filmed in London, was at Wimbledon almost daily. She was very fond of the grass court season. As one story goes, she ran into Pancho Segura and they watched their friend Derrick Rostagno. Segura was saying the most outrageous things, and everyone was cracking up. Supposedly, Rostagno heard what had been said, and asked him to keep it down because he was trying his hardest to win. Then everyone laughed more..."

"She was much more than a talented actress," as 10sBall.com mentioned. "She was a skilled painter, whose best portrait was of a kindly, bespectacled candy matriarch Mary See, which no one knows she created. It hangs in See's Candies shops across the U.S." Freeman left her friends and the game in late May.

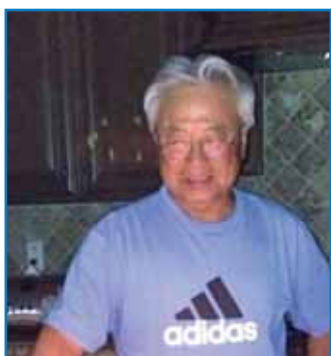


Pete Gerry

William Peter (Pete) Gerry was born in Sussex, England, and graduated from

Wofford College in South Carolina. After serving in the US Marine Corps, he settled in Southern California where he worked as a software engineer. In time, he became involved in the aerospace industry as a guidance systems specialist.

An individual with a plethora of off the court interests, he was known throughout the section as an outstanding tournament player, one who was once the best in the Men's 70 division. In addition to his ball striking talent, he had an outstanding sense of humor and a charming personality. Teaming with Tony Pauz, they won the National Men's 70 Consolation doubles, twelve days before he left the game in early July. Pete Gerry will always be remembered for "Playing on..."



Rick Oki
Photo Nikki Robbins

Rick Oki was an individual who quietly gave the game his heart and soul. He did it behind the scenes, at Nikki Robbins' program (Nikki's Tennis Crew) at Weddington Tennis in Studio City. While his wife, Mindy and in time, his daughter, Aimee, were deeply involved, introducing anyone and everyone, or so it seemed, to the sport, he was the steady presence whose unflinching smile and unassuming personality served as a solid foundation for what "his ladies" did on the court. When he passed away in late May, a husband, father and friend left many behind. All of them will look back on the time they spent with him as treasured moments.

In the Youth Tennis San Diego Junior News, Anne Podney wrote in the July issue, "The San Diego tennis community lost a dear friend in early April when Thuan Pham passed away. He was the father of former junior standouts Tyler and Tom Pham, and the husband of Tammy. Thuan and his family came to the US from Vietnam when he was 10. He was one of nine children and graduated from University of California



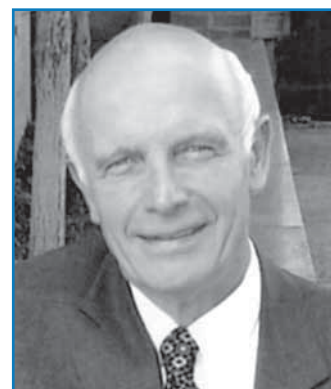
Thuan Pham with his family
Photo Youth Tennis San Diego

San Diego. In Rancho Bernardo, where he lived, it was said that he was the man who could 'fix anything.'

"He loved tennis and as close friend Carolyn Bernhardt, with whom he coached the Jr. Team Tennis squad that won the prestigious Gar Glenney Cup in 2004, remembered, 'He was an ideal tennis parent; a wonderful role model.' Another friend recalled being impressed years ago, when Thuan was watching a match that Tyler was playing and calling to him, 'Tyler, you need to give your opponent that point. The ball was good.' Now, of course, I don't encourage parents talking to their children during tournament play, but this remark summarized how, above all, he wanted his sons to be good sports and play fair, which they were.

"Lee Merry said, sharing some of his memories, 'I am thankful to Tammy and Thuan Pham for giving me the privilege of working with their sons, Tyler and Tom, beginning when they were nine-years-old for over ten years. It was a blessing for me to be a small part of their family. While it was wonderful to see the boys develop into championship tennis players and fine young men, the special bonus was that I got to spend time with Thuan for all those years. He was dedicated to his sons and so proud of them. He would arrange his work schedule so he could bring them to their lessons with me. In my profession, parents can be a handful. In all my years of coaching I have never known a better tennis parent. Thuan had a love for the game and understood it far better than most of the tennis community. He cared about all my students and all the families he touched in Southern California. I loved being on the court with him and his boys. We worked as a team. I am a better coach because of him.

His understanding, dedication and love for the game is why the boys are so successful. Often I would catch myself thinking, 'Why can't more tennis parents be like Thuan?' In physical stature I am a tall man, much taller than Thuan. But, there was never a day that I was not looking up at him. Thuan loved the outdoors and was an avid hiker. As difficult as it is to lose Thuan, it is comforting to know he passed doing what he loved (hiking). He will be missed by all who knew him. 'Thuan, thanks for all the wonderful memories'."



Harold Turley

Harold Turley was a successful lawyer who kept out of the spotlight. All that he was interested in was his granddaughters having every opportunity to become successful tennis players. As Brad Pearce, the men's tennis coach at BYU, said at the end of May when Turley died, "Harold will be remembered for his great support of the men's tennis program and players, his love for tennis, and his passion for excellence. He will be cherished as an example of what it truly means to be a loving husband, father, grandfather, philanthropist, mentor and friend.

"I am personally grateful for his mentoring and friendship and the love that he shared with me, Cindi and all of our children. Harold is truly one of the Great Ones. It is with great sadness that I extend condolences to Elaine (his wife) and the entire family."

During the recent NFL Hall of Fame induction ceremony, Aeneas Williams, one of this year's honorees who, during his career, played cornerback and safety for the Arizona Cardinals and St. Louis Rams, put life in sports into perspective when he said, "Begin with the end in mind. Die empty..."

Doing so meant that life was played to its fullest, and each of those mentioned did this.

Fire Ravages Racquet Club

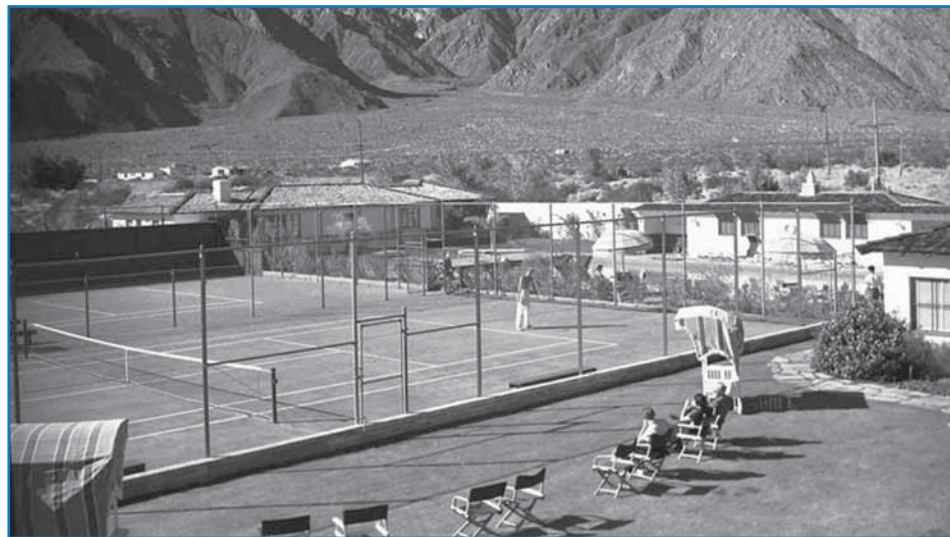
Mark Winters

In late July, a fire ravaged the Racquet Club of Palm Springs. An historic desert tennis stop for the Hollywood movie industry elite, it was founded by Ralph Belamy and Charlie Ferrell and opened in 1934 on Christmas Day. Kirk Douglas, Errol Flynn, Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy, Elizabeth Taylor, Robert Wagner and Natalie Wood are just a few of the stars who spent time on its courts or lounging around the pool, where Marilyn Monroe was supposedly discovered. The Bamboo Room featured culinary delights, and, it is said that, the club served the first “Bloody Mary.” In its day, it was so popular that there was a “Waiting List” for the club’s actual “Membership Waiting List.”

Steve and Abby Solomon are long-time Palm Springs residents. “It was for the movie people,” he remembered. “It was built on the wrong end of town because the land was cheap, and the courts faced the wrong way, but it didn’t matter because no one played tennis in the morning. After they recovered from the previous night’s activities and were ready to play, the sun’s position was fine. Julie Copeland was the hostess and she set up a schedule. You played an hour and a half and then got off the court, but everyone stayed there because it was so comfortable, and you could always get back on the court.”

Given the clientele, the social setting matched the food, the card playing and the drinking. With the likes of Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, the Sinatras, Frank and Barbara, along with Dinah Shore and Donna Reed being regulars, the club had a special panache. “They served a Mousie Powell hamburger and on Tuesday night the winner of the Mouseburger Tournament (named for the wife of William Powell) got a Mousie Powell burger,” Solomon said. “It was a great place to be.”

Jack Kramer, Don Budge, Gussy Moran, Nancy Chaffee Kiner, along with various Davis Cup teams, were in the Hall of Fame-like group who regularly played there. Bobby Riggs hustled everyone, while George Toley and Bill Davis handled tennis instruc-



Racquet Club Of Palm Springs
Photo Palm Springs Historical Society

tion during various times. Pancho Segura was on hand simply being “Pancho.” Arthur Ashe and Jimmy Connors are just two of the standout competitors who participated in the annual Charlie Ferrell Tournament.

“It was a great event,” remembered Allen Fox. “I probably played in it at half dozen times, and I won it once, beating Charlie Pasarell in the final. We stayed at the club and lived like kings. It was very glitzy. There were movie stars around, and all the best players in Southern California played it. Julie Copeland was the hostess, and I believe Roxy Turpin was later.”

Having been involved in the game forever and written about it for almost as long, I must add that the first time I went to the club, I didn’t play tennis. In fact, I knew next to nothing about the game. In those days, I thought I was a baseball prospect (because supposedly knowledgeable people said so) and had hopes of becoming a major league catcher. So one Easter break, a good friend, who happened to know Tony Owen (who was Donna Reed’s husband, and they had a place near the club) took me to Palm Springs because the San Francisco Giants used a facility near the club as a Spring Training base.

I spent the entire vacation participating

in Spring Training, chasing baseballs at the various diamonds in the area and getting to know the players. I had an opportunity to spend time with the likes of Willie Mays and the other stars who took me under their wing because I was a relatively impressionable youngster. And, I loved every minute of the time there.

Just before my escape from school was to end, I was taken to the club and had an opportunity to see top level tennis played for the first time. To be honest, I was more impressed by the striking women that seemed to spend the day around the swimming pool, and were part of the staggering collection of important people (none of whom I knew by name, but based on the way they presented themselves, it was clear that they had movie and television industry status).

“At one time they had, at least, 1,400 members, but that changed,” Solomon said. “There were more clubs and people were anxious to become involved with new facilities.”

The property has changed hands a number of times since the golden days, and for a period it was used by the homeless as a place to squat. In 2013, Olivia Communities became the owner and intended to turn it into a “LGBT and friends” community, but the plans are still on the drawing board.

Looking back, I now realize how fortunate I was to have experienced something very special and not even know it.

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San Diego Tennis Hall Of Fame Induction

Mark Winters

Being a native San Diegan, who took up tennis as a seven-year-old, Larry Belinsky has been immersed in the game, locally, his entire life. Believing that the area is the “Mecca” for the sport, he decided to call attention to all those who have played a role in making the location the sport’s hotbed.

He founded, and is the spirit behind the San Diego Tennis Hall of Fame. In 2006, its inaugural induction class included, Bill Bond, Michael Chang, Dodo Cheney, Maureen Connolly Brinker, Jeanne Doyle Garrett, Wilbur Folsom, Karen Hantze Susman, William S. Kellogg, Fred Kinne and Ben Press. The next year, Katherine Chabot Willette, Alex Gordon, Pancho Segura, William Stack and Suella Steel were recognized. In 2008, Franklin Johnson, William J. Kellogg, Jean Kremm, James Perley and Brian Teacher were feted.

The following year, it was the turn of George Barnes, Robert D. Carrothers, Jr., Ed Collins, Kelly Jones and Dr. Homer Peabody. Robert Bacon, Patricia Canning



Ana Stofen (Lester Stofen’s granddaughter), Jane Stratton, Racquel Giscafne, Sally Appleby (Robert Galloway’s step-daughter), Carmen Brock (Roland Brock’s daughter-in-law) and Steve Avoyer

Todd, Virginia M. Glass, Robert Perry, and Larry Willens were the celebrants in 2010. Twelve-months later, Harper Ink, Sr., Angel Lopez, Gretchen Magers, Bobby Riggs and Valerie Ziegenfuss were honored. In 2012, Roy Barth, Terry Holladay, Jerry Magee, Marita Redondo and Dick Robertson received accolades.

In August, Steve Avoyer, Roland Brock, Robert Galloway, Raquel Giscafne, Lester

Stofen, Sr. and Jane Stratton were saluted.

“Simply, when the idea of the Hall of Fame was conceived, I wanted to preserve and protect what made these people great and insure that they would not be forgotten,” Belinsky said. “What makes it work, like anything in life, is passion. When a person aspires and believes in something great, as I have with the Hall of Fame, it becomes a product with integrity that people have not only come to respect, but also enjoy.

“It fills my heart with pride, not only to recognize those who have left their indelible mark in San Diego’s great tennis history, but also, to bring people together who, in some cases, have not seen each other (sometimes) for more than twenty years. It is this ‘reunion’ of sorts that inspires me to keep coming back for more. If the San Diego Tennis Hall of Fame is an excuse for bringing people together and, at the same time, recognize their contributions and/or accomplishments, then this is a good thing.”