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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jaime Kaplan to be Inducted into Southern Tennis Hall of Fame

FORMER WTA TOUR PLAYER IS LEADING COACH IN MACON, GA

ATLANTA – September 15, 2019 – The Southern Tennis Foundation and USTA Southern announced today three tennis luminaries are scheduled for induction into the 2020 class of the Southern Tennis Hall of Fame.

Jaime Kaplan was a ball person at a pro tournament in her hometown of Macon, Ga., at the age of 9. She immediately set her sights on becoming a pro tennis player. She would reach that goal in 1983 when she began her WTA career, reaching No. 91 in the world in doubles.

Others to be inducted are:

- **Lenny Simpson**, the founder of One Love, an award-winning tennis organization, and a former standout junior and adult player. In 1964, he was the youngest male player to play in the US Open, a record that stood for about 40 years.
- **Jack Tuero** was a leading player at Tulane University during its domination of the SEC men's tennis in the 1940s and 1950s. He was the NCAA singles champion in 1949. As a pro, he reached the second round of the US Open in 1954.

They are scheduled to be inducted Jan. 18, 2020, during the Lucy Garvin Southern Tennis Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, in Atlanta.

Established in 1977 with the induction of Bitsy Grant and Ham Richardson, the Hall of Fame will grow to 110 members after the induction ceremony. Other notable members include Stan Smith, Chanda Rubin, Roscoe Tanner, Gordon A. Smith, Linda Tuero (Jack Tuero's niece), Gardner Mulloy and Garvin. The [Southern Tennis Foundation's](http://SouthernTennisFoundation.org) website contains information on the hall, inductees and its charitable mission. The hall is located in the USTA Southern offices in Peachtree Corners, Ga.

Jaime Kaplan Consummate Pro & Volunteer

Jaime Kaplan made news on the tennis court at the age of 9.

Her hometown of Macon, Ga., was hosting a pro tennis tournament and there were lots of ball boys, but only one ball girl. "The newspaper caption called me a 'breakthrough for women's lib,' " she laughed and said in a 2014 interview.

"I wanted to be a tennis pro since the first time I picked up a racquet. Some kids want to be a doctor or a lawyer. There was never a question in my mind."

Kaplan made that dream come true in 1983 when she began her seven-year career on the WTA Tour.

Kaplan's prominence cuts across many of the connecting fibers of Macon tennis, starting with her junior career. From 1971-80,



she was ranked No. 1 singles and doubles in USTA Southern and Georgia 13 times, competing in the Girls' 10s through Women's Open. At Stratford Academy, she was a three-time high school state champion in basketball as an All-State and All-Star player.

She didn't too bad in tennis, either, going undefeated in singles and doubles (156-0) throughout her five-year career. Kaplan received Stratford's 1979 Best Senior Athlete award and was named the 1977 Amateur Athlete of the Year presented by the Macon Sports Hall of Fame as a sophomore. She was nominated as Best Athlete of the Decade by The Macon Telegraph, eight years after they ran that photo of her as a ball person.

Four decades later, the academy's tennis center was named after Kaplan. The Jaime Kaplan Tennis Center has served as the site of the Macon Pro Circuit tournament as well as several state, sectional and national tournaments. She had an outstanding collegiate career, winning the SEC doubles title at the University of Georgia in 1981. Next stop was Florida State, where she was a singles champion and two-time doubles titlist in the Metro Conference. She was the first FSU player to qualify for the NCAA championships.

Over the next seven years, Kaplan appeared in 14 Grand Slam tournaments including five times at Wimbledon. In 1988 she reached the Wimbledon round of 16 in mixed doubles. She won five WTA doubles crowns, teaming with Jill Hetherington for her biggest victory and with Iva Budarova defeated two top 10 singles players in doubles, the Maleeva sisters, Katerina and Manuela.

Kaplan's highest rankings were No. 91 in doubles and No. 252 in singles until a knee injury cut short her career in 1989.

Randy Stephens, a former USTA Southern President who was inducted into the Southern Tennis Hall of Fame in 2014, said, "Jaime Kaplan's accomplishments and contributions to tennis cross a wide spectrum. In addition to an outstanding junior and collegiate career, she played professional tennis at the highest level. After her playing career, she worked as a successful teaching professional and is one of the most successful high school coaches in the history of Georgia tennis.

"After becoming the head tennis coach at Stratford in 2005, her no-cut tennis teams have won 46 area/region titles and 17 state championships," Stephens continued. "Also, she developed a celebrity golf tournament that has raised over \$9,000,000 for local charities in Middle Georgia over the past 30 years. Her influence through tennis in Macon is unmatched. She is a shining star in our community."

Over the past 30 years, she serves or has served on over a dozen nonprofit boards and in 2011 filled an unexpired term for six months on Macon's City Council.

Kaplan has battled numerous injuries and surgeries. But, in 2009, she faced her biggest hurdle. She was diagnosed with extramedullary acute myeloid leukemia (AML). She cited the support of her high school players as helping her recover. Kaplan has served as Stratford's head tennis coach from 2005 to present. She is the former Alumni Director and Major Gifts Coordinator for Stratford. Currently, she is the Director of Philanthropy at United Way of Central Georgia and Manager of the Five Star Kevin Brown Russell Henley Celebrity Classic.

A notable volunteer honor – the USTA Eve Kraft Award – came her way in 2008. "Eve Kraft was a dedicated community tennis pioneer who was the original architect of how to grow the game at the grassroots level, making tennis accessible for anyone who wants to play," said Kurt Kamperman, Chief Executive, USTA National Campus. "Jaime Kaplan is a passionate, hands-on volunteer. She's cut from the same cloth as Eve and we are proud to honor her with this award." Her honors and accomplishments include:

- Reached world rankings of No. 91 in doubles and No. 252 in singles
- Won five WTA doubles crowns
- Went undefeated in singles and doubles in five years of high school play
- Previously inducted into four halls of fame: USTA Georgia Tennis (2006), Georgia Sports (2005), Macon Sports (2001) and Stratford Academy Athletic (2004)
- Won the SEC doubles title at the University of Georgia in 1981
- Metro Conference 1983 singles champion and two-time doubles titlist while playing at Florida State

- Ranked No. 1 singles and doubles in USTA Southern and Georgia 13 times
- Honored with the USTA Eve Kraft Award in 2008
- Stratford Academy's tennis center is named the Jaime Kaplan Tennis Center

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The **USTA** is the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the U.S. and the leader in promoting and developing the growth of tennis at every level – from local communities to the highest level of the professional game. It owns and operates the US Open, the largest annually attended sporting event in the world, and launched the **US Open Series** linking six summer tournaments to the US Open. In addition, it owns about 90 Pro Circuit events throughout the U.S., and selects the teams for the Davis Cup, Fed Cup, Olympic and Paralympic games. A not-for-profit organization with more than 615,000+ members, it invests 100 percent of its proceeds in growing the game. It is divided into 17 sections, of which **USTA Southern** is the largest. The 160,000+ USTA members living in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee make up USTA Southern, and account for nearly 25 percent of the total USTA membership. A professional staff housed in Peachtree Corners, Ga., carries out USTA Southern's daily operations, but policy is formed and much of the organization's work is executed via a board and committee structure of more than 200 volunteers. For more information about the types of programs and services offered by USTA Southern, visit www.southerntennis.com.

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