

USTA Northern California is dedicated to individuals in our tennis community whose achievements and contributions have gone above and beyond the game of tennis within the NorCal section. The USTA Northern California Hall of Fame was established by retired banker Elmer Griffin in 1974 to honor NorCal's outstanding tennis community.

### Class of 2017 Inductees:

- Tom Barnes
- Steve DeVries
- Dave Higaki
- Kristy Pigeon
- Ted Robinson

### Tom Barnes: Enjoying Tennis - The Game and the Rules

Becoming an umpire was a natural fit. While playing junior tennis in Southern California, Tom explains, “in those days, as soon as you lost in a sanctioned tennis tournament, you had to umpire. I got more experience umpiring than playing tennis!”

Tom began his life in tennis simply enough. His mother, an avid player, cut the handle off an old tennis racket and he began swinging, as they say. Born in Oxnard, California, he played junior tennis while attending Santa Clara High School in Southern California. Right after graduating in 1964, his parents relocated to Sacramento. Tom attended Sacramento City College for a year before transferring to UC Berkeley. After graduating from Cal in 1969, Tom joined the Marines. Tom continued to play recreationally while in the Corps. After the Corps., he entered a tournament for 35s in Tiberon.



“I called the club to get the schedule. They gave me a time, but it didn’t sound right to me. So, I called the next day and talked to someone else. But they gave me the same information. I figured, what do I know? So, I show up and the referee says ‘Barnes, where’ve you been? You were supposed to be here this morning!’ I obviously got the wrong information.” He was scheduled for two matches but was only given information for the second match; the tournament had to default him. “I started explaining my thoughts about tennis officiating at that point and the ref challenged me. He said, ‘if you’re so good, sit over on that baseline and call that ball.’” That was 1978 and Tom realized he liked officiating. By 1979, Tom earned his



Certified USTA Linesman status from the Men's International Professional Tennis Council (MIPTC).

In 1980, and for the next four years, Tom worked as the Assistant Executive Director for the Northern California Tennis Association (NCTA) where he managed the tournaments and worked with the Juniors. "I still run in to some of those kids, now all grown up of course, in my travels," he said. "I'd like to think I had some influence on them. I'm pretty much black and white when it comes to the rules and their applications. When the kids were growing up and I oversaw Juniors, they learned we adhered to those rules. If they were late, they were defaulted. If they misbehaved, they had to suffer the consequences." He said he is proud of the players he oversaw, managed and worked with during his NCTA days.

He worked with Peter Herb, who served as USTA NorCal Executive Director for 40 years. Peter was also certified by the MIPTC. "There were only about 20 of us in the world, and here two of us were in the same office. That was certainly cool," Tom said. In 1983, Tom attended the MIPTC School in Boston to become internationally certified as a referee, as well. "I became one of a very small number certified by the MIPTC as a Referee, Chair Umpire and Chief Umpire."

Shortly after his certification, Tom accepted a position as the General Manager for the Sierra Sport & Racquet Club in Fresno in 1984. He served the club for ten years. While there, he also began contracting with the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) in 1990. He served as a U.S. Open Referee in 1991 and 1992. By 1994, he took a role as full-time Supervisor for the ATP Tour.

Two tournaments stand out to Barnes. "I've been going to Indian Wells, it was one of my first pro tournament outside of NorCal, since 1981 and it's also the first tournament where I was a Chair Umpire in a professional match. Since that time, I've only missed the tournament three or four times. I've worked as a linesman, a Chair Umpire, assistant to the Referee, the Referee to the ATP Supervisor."

In addition, he is proud of his role at Barcelona Open Banc Sabadell which he worked since 1998, where he served as the ATP Supervisor. "The Supervisor puts on a dinner for the staff and officials. I always gave a speech in Spanish. Now they are part of Catalonia, I must give the speech in Catalan. I know what I'm trying to say. I'm not sure what I actually say, but they all appreciate the effort."

"I see tennis every day in my job," Tom said. He works as many as 23 tournaments throughout the year in the U.S., Europe and Asia. As supervisor, he oversees the competition, acts as the final onsite authority, makes sure all participants—tournament officials and players—comply with all ATP rules and regulations. "The players look to us to ensure that all are treated equally whether they are a top-rated player or one of the up-and-comers," he said.

## Steve DeVries: Coming Full Circle

Steve DeVries grew up traveling around the country with his family. Born in Cincinnati, the family moved to Chicago when he was three and Fullerton at 8. It was in Maryland, when he turned 10 where he picked up his first racket. Steve and his brother split their time between football, basketball and tennis.



“We moved to Northern California, Green Valley actually, when I was 13,”

Steve said. “We got there after the baseball league started. So, my brother and I decided to play tennis. We played two or three times a day!” What Steve found and enjoyed was simple. “With tennis, I could control the pace. I was more in control. It really challenged me physically and mentally.”

While living in Green Valley, he met Phil Cello, a NorCal Hall of Fame inductee. Phil was the teaching pro at the Green Valley Tennis Club. “Phil became one of my coaches,” Steve said. Steve played four years on the Armijo High School (Fairfield, California) tennis team. By his 15th year, he dropped his other sports to focus on tennis. He earned the No. 1 position in Boys 16s and Boys 18s in Northern California. He played several tournaments including Kalamazoo, USTA Clay Court Championships, USTA National Indoor Championships, and USTA Intersectional Team Championships, to name a few. He earned the #17 rank in the country in the Boys 18s in his second year and won the Allen B. Stowe National Sportsmanship Award.

Steve went to UC Berkeley after graduating from Armijo High. After merely a month at the school, he signed up for the pre-qualifying rounds for the pro tournament at Transamerica. He surprised himself by winning six pre-qualifying rounds and three qualifying matches. He made it to the first round of the main draw. “I had the chance to play Ivan Lendl,” Steve said. “It was the first time I realized I might have a chance at going pro. Plus it was a great way to meet new people in my dorm.”

Steve’s college career at Cal included becoming a three time All-American and playing all four years as No. 1. During his junior year, he won the International Tennis Association (ITA) All-American Championship tournament and ranked No. 1 in the country for several weeks. During his senior year, he reached the finals for the ITA All-American and the ITA Division I National Men’s Team Indoor Championship. By the end of that season, he ranked No. 4 in the country. He also won the Arthur Ashe Jr. Sportsmanship and the Rafael Osuna Sportsmanship awards.

After graduating with a B.S. degree in 1987, Steve joined the pro circuit. By 1991 he reached the quarterfinals of the U.S. Open in doubles. He was also a runner-up in Rotterdam. In 1992, he

won at Indian Wells, Atlanta, Charlotte and Brisbane with his partner, Davis Macpherson. The pair qualified for the World Doubles Finals in Johannesburg, South Africa. In 1993, he was runner up at Stuttgart and New Haven.

After suffering an injury, Steve turned to coaching in 1995. “I started working with Colleen Gray and she took No. 1 in NorCal for Girls 14,” Steve said. His coaching career took off as he began working with several junior players in NorCal. He met USTA Director of Coaching, Tom Gullickson, and shortly after, began working on projects for the organization. One project, in 1998, started out working with Stan Smith at a weeklong summer camp for the top college players in Texas. He met and started coaching James and Thomas Blake. “I ended up working the summer with them,” he said. It wasn’t long before USTA offered him a position as a Boy Sports Team national coach.

In 1999, Steve joined the USTA full time and in 2001 began coaching Robby Ginepri. Robby earned No. 20 while working with Steve. By 2004, Steve left USTA to work full time coaching Robby. In 2005, he started working with Tim Smyczek who was No. 68 in 2015, and Rajeev Ram, who won the Silver Medal with Venus Williams at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games and was No. 56 in 2016.

Being a Hall of Fame inductee is not new to Steve. In 2010, he was welcomed into the inaugural California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Sac Joaquin Hall of Fame. In 2016, he was honored by the Cal Berkeley Hall of Fame. Steve has now gone full circle and serves as the Tennis Director at the Green Valley Country Club. “I really enjoyed coaching the players—from those that are just starting out their journey in tennis to those that are well on their way.” Steve continues to give back to the broader tennis community as a faculty USTA coach working at regional training camps and supporting the NorCal USTA endeavors.

## **Dave Higaki: Living the Life of Tennis**

Life is tennis and tennis is life. At least, that’s the way it seems when you meet one of USTA NorCal’s newest Hall of Fame inductees. In fact, if you have been to a USTA NorCal event, you probably know Dave Higaki.



Dave, currently the Executive Director of East Palo Alto Tennis & Tutoring (EPATT), exemplifies what it means to live the tennis life. He began at an early age picking up a racket while he watched his mother play the game. Dave played throughout his high school career at Palo Alto’s Gunn High School. He continued to hone his tennis skills during his college years at Menlo College where he earned his B.A. in 1989. But, if you know Dave, playing tennis

wasn't enough.

While in college he worked at the Nike Tennis Camps at Stanford. There he worked with Dick and Anne Gould, renowned university coaches, who set him up on a lifelong love of coaching. He also met Jim Triolo, USPTA Teaching Pro, and Nick Carter, top-level amateur champion (Hall of Fame 1993), from Court Works Youth Tennis. "Meeting Dick, Anne, Jim and Nick had a profound effect on my approach to coaching," Dave said.

After earning his college degree, Dave joined Bill Jacobson, Hall of Fame 2015, at CompuTennis, as a statistician. According to Dave, focusing on statistics provided a unique perspective on the game. He learned about the importance of strategy and how to interpret what he saw on the court. This expanded understanding, once again, influenced how he coaches the game today. "I learned to appreciate the numbers in sports long before they became a daily conversation," he said. "I am thankful that I could understand and teach about game analytics early on." While at CompuTennis, Dave attended matches at Wimbledon and other ATP and WTA tournaments. He provided stats for HBO and Fox Sports programs. In 1994, Venus Williams' coach, Rick Macci, hired the company to do her stats for her pro debut at the Bank of the West Classic.

Dave continued to coach privately as well, working under Chris Bradley at Alpine Hills Tennis and Swimming Club in Portola Valley. "I had the pleasure to work with some higher-performance juniors like James Pade, who ranked nationally and played for Stanford. I worked with him for eight years, from 12 to 20 years old." Dave also worked with top NorCal Junior and Cal player, Lisa Swiernik, and with Iwalani McCalla, after she graduated UCLA when she was starting out on the pro tour.

At Alpine, Dave met Stanford All-American Jeff Arons who founded East Palo Alto Tennis and Tutoring (EPATT) Program. Jeff invited Dave to join him in his quest to help youth through academics, tennis and parent education. That was 1994. In addition to working at Alpine, he had the opportunity to coach University of Michigan graduate, Grady Burnett. "I was his traveling coach and hitting partner on the tour," Dave said. "We traveled 20 weeks a year and then I'd work with EPATT in between."

By 1998, Dave earned his place as the EPATT Executive Director. At EPATT, he built an excellent team whom he credits for the organization's success and proudly states that EPATT has become a national model for tennis and education programs. "I'm proud that EPATT has influenced many programs around the country. We are most proud that EPATT's influence is for the family, not just the students. We are strong advocates for parent education too."

In 2008, EPATT was named the nation's #1 after-school tennis and tutoring program by First Serve. In 2016, EPATT received Stanford University's first "Community Partnership Legacy Award" in recognition of its continued initiative, leadership and involvement in efforts that benefit the overall community.

The awards are not only for EPATT. In 1997, Dave received the USTA NorCal Fred Earle Award

for his contributions to the growth of tennis as a teaching professional. In 2011, he received the NorCal Diversity Icon Award and the USTA Foundation Judy Levering Leadership Award.

All said, Dave is not finished. He is currently serving his second term as Vice-Chair for the National Junior Tennis League's National Committee and was recently named to the USTA Foundation's Advisory Committee. He is an advocate for tennis facilities in Menlo Park and East Palo Alto, has written for Tennis Match Magazine and is a member of the Hispanic Engagement Advisory Group.

## **Kristy Pigeon: Make Your Mark Early and Often**

By the age of 18, Kristy Pigeon was well known in the field of tennis. The Danville, California, resident picked up her first racket five years earlier, took the Section championship in 16 & Under in 1965 and was the runner up for the 16 & Under United States Lawn Tennis Association (USTLA, now USTA) National Championship in 1966. Two years later, she won the 18 & Under section and by 1968 was the USTLA National Champion – in singles and doubles, partnering with NorCal's Denise Carter-Triolo.



Her winning streak continued, as she won the Girls' Singles Wimbledon Championship in July, the Welsh Open Championships at Newport, the Pennsylvania Lawn Tennis Championships at Haverford in August, and the hits kept on coming. It wasn't long after that when Kristy turned pro. Kristy ranked number 1 in the world in 21 & Under—all before she started her first year in college.

"I was a top ranked player before I graduated high school. But you have to remember, we didn't have college scholarships like we do today," Kristy said. "I went to Mills College where I spent half the year in studies and half playing on the tour." Kristy did receive offers from Arizona University and from a college in Odessa, Texas. "This was all before Title IX," she explained. She proudly recalls winning a Good Citizenship scholarship from the City of Danville's Chamber of Commerce.

Kristy was one of the "Original Nine," a group of women including American pros Billie Jean King, Rosemary Casals, Nancy Richey, Peaches Bartkowicz, Valerie Ziegenfuss and Julie Heldman, and Australians Kerry Melville Reid and Judy Tegart Dalton. This group, together with Gladys Heldman, the publisher of World Tennis, stood strong to ensure a greater equality in tennis. "You can imagine how frightening this was, we put our careers on the line," Kristy said.

“At the time, prize money for one tournament was \$35,000 for men and \$2,000 for women.” Kristy shares that the prevailing thought back then was “nobody wants to watch women play tennis.”

It wasn't easy to build up a women's tournament. With the support of Philip Morris, the owner of the Virginia Slims brand, Gladys organized eight professional tournaments sponsored by the brand known for its “You've come a long way baby” mantra. According to a Wikipedia article, the independent women's professional tennis circuit provided a more equal playing field when measured by prize money packages.

It wasn't all easy-going Kristy said. “We all had to pitch in to convince our fans to watch tennis.” According to Kristy, the pros got up early to do radio interviews and support each tournament. “We went out to K-Mart or wherever tennis gear was sold to meet our fans face-to-face. We gave away tickets to encourage folks to come watch us, we really worked hard to build up the respect and the awareness for women's tennis,” Kristy said.

Kristy continued playing tennis on the tour until the mid-1970s. She continued her schooling and earned an BA degree in Art and Biology from UC Berkeley. In 1975, she relocated to Sunny Valley, Idaho where she directed the John Gardiner Tennis camps. Shortly after, she founded her own tennis school, Elkhorn Tennis School. She led the school for twelve years and earned a rating as a top 100 tennis resort in the world.

After selling Elkhorn, Kristy founded the Sagebrush Equine Training Center for the Handicapped (SETCH). Her vision to bring the healing power of horses to individuals in need. She trained with the National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy in Woodside, California. She served as the executive director for until her retirement in 2010. SETCH, now known as Swiftsure Ranch, continues to carry out Kristy's vision to provide therapeutic horseback riding lessons to individuals with disabilities at no cost.

## **Ted Robinson: Hooked on Tennis**

The year was 1986, the match was John McEnroe against Jimmy Connors played at the Cow Palace. The effect, Ted Robinson was hooked on tennis.

Ted, born in Queens and raised in Rockville Centre, New York, first came to California in 1980 to work with the Oakland A's. In 1982, he began working with KCBS Radio in San Francisco. His current moniker, “The Voice of the 49ers,” comes from his role as the radio play-by-play announcer for the iconic



San Francisco team which began in 2009. In 1986, a couple of producers at USA Network asked Ted to tryout as a tennis announcer. That's how he came back to cover the event at the Cow Palace. But, Ted said, it was that McEnroe-Connors match that injected him with the tennis bug. "The match was great," he said. "It was the first match I ever called and the next year, 1987, was the first opportunity I had to call the U.S. Open." Ted covered that tournament for 22 years on the USA Network, until 2008. As Ted describes it, it was an extraordinary opportunity and "the best sports television that I was involved in. We were able to capture the flavor of the event, New York and the spirit of NY."

Since USA Network covered through the quarter finals, he never got the chance to call the finals. "But I had a chance to call several French and Wimbledon finals," he said. "The U.S. Open is still the event I'm identified with when folks call out to 'tennis guy, we love watching you.' It was appointment television."

While covering tennis, he continued covering the four major Bay Area sports teams. He served as the play-by-play voice for the Golden State Warriors from 1983-1985; he covered Oakland A's on television from 1985 to 1987. From 1993 to 2001, he was covering the San Francisco Giants on both radio and TV. In 2009, he began his current stint as the Voice of the 49ers. He's announced for Stanford Football for 13 years and for Cal Basketball for four years. Ted covered 10 Olympics Games, which started in 1998. He noted his only tennis coverage was the Gold Medal match between Andy Murray and Roger Federer at the 2012 London Games.

"I've covered a range of sports," he said. "Of course, I've been in Major League baseball for 23 years, but I called the Equestrian Championships, World Championships in Swimming and Diving—a lot during the Olympics—I covered the World Nordic Skiing Championships, Sky Jumping and White-Water Kayaking. I've had a wide world of sports experience."

Tennis continues to be a focus for Ted. In 2000, he joined NBC as a tennis play-by-play announcer. He called Wimbledon Championships from 2000 to 2011. He covered the French Open from 2000 to present. He also began working with the Tennis Channel, since 2006, to cover a wide range of events from the French Open to the Davis Cup, Indian Wells and others. He's covered tennis matches for the Pac-12 Network since 2012.

Ted connected with the USTA NorCal through its events, like the Hall of Fame Luncheon, in the early 2000s. After working with Dick and Anne Gould, he was drawn to the organization because of its support for the volunteers. "The most rewarding part of the association with USTA NorCal is to learn about the work of the volunteers and to see these people that make tennis happen be honored." He noted that he gets to watch the professionals play, but "we understand how important it is at every level."

The two-time Emmy Award winner was inducted into the Bay Area Radio Hall of Fame in 2012. In 2014, he joined the Board of East Palo Alto Tennis & Tutoring (EPATT). "Tennis and my appreciation for the sport has grown on me," Ted said. "That request 'way back when' to cover the McEnroe-Connors match kicked off an unexpected 30 years of fascination."



Tennis continued to grow on Ted over the years. He wasn't around the sport growing up, but covering the sport, learning about it from his colleagues and learning to play has been enlightening. "That said, I'm really humbled by all the volunteers that I meet at the USTA NorCal events. These people are what make tennis work at all levels. It's most rewarding to be able to be recognized among them."