

## Hall of Fame Class of 2013 Barbara Scofield Davidson

Barbara Scofield Davidson has been playing tennis for over 75 years. In that time she has been a true pioneer for women's sports.

Barbara was one of the first females to earn a tennis scholarship from the University of Miami in the late 1940's. The opportunity allowed her to travel the world where she earned an extensive list of singles, doubles and mixed doubles titles that is comparable to any top pro player in the world today. Barbara held a top ten world ranking five different times from 1946 to 1956. Her Grand Slam record includes reaching the singles quarterfinals of the US Open, singles semifinals of the French Open and winning the mixed doubles title at the French Open.

"My mother is the most humble former great tennis player in the world! They didn't give scholarships for women's sports in those days, but she got one. She has a bracelet full of platinum balls and quite a track record," says Michael Davidson, Barbara's son. "I played tennis my entire life because of my mom; from the age of three she drove me everywhere to play. She was extremely supportive and had a profound influence on me."

A Bay Area native, Barbara was born in San Francisco in 1926. She started playing tennis when she was 11 years old. "My mother wanted me to learn so I took lessons at Golden Gate Park," she explains. "I loved it; I enjoyed the exercise and the excitement of the game."

She was an active junior player and along with participating in tennis events throughout the state, Barbara spent her summers playing in tournaments in Southern California.

After two years of attending the University of California, Berkeley, Barbara was offered a scholarship to the University of Miami. "They had clay courts in Miami," Barbara recalls. "I enjoyed playing on clay; there were many clay courts throughout the country at the time."

Barbara set out to see the world after she graduated. "At the time, tennis offered a great opportunity to travel; you didn't make much money but your expenses would be covered," Barbara explains. "We got to play all over the world and see places like Europe, Istanbul, Argentina and Brazil."

Paris became a much-loved city for Barbara, with the French Open being one of her favorite tournaments. She says, "The American women at the time were the best on clay; from the quarterfinals on there the majority of the players left in the tournament would be American."

The prestigious grass courts of Wimbledon hold special memories for Barbara. She explains, "It is something every tennis player hopes to do and I was lucky enough to play at Wimbledon five different times." One of those times granted the opportunity to meet Queen Elizabeth. "It was an exciting moment in a very special place."

Playing at the US Open was also a time to remember, and a privilege that Barbara enjoyed six times throughout her career. Barbara says, "The US Open was held on grass then at the Westside Tennis Club in Queens – it was such a lovely place."

Meeting her husband Gordon in 1951 on a boat bound for Europe was another way that tennis graced Barbara's life. "We met on the boat on the way over and ended up travelling all summer together," says Gordon. "Thanks to tennis we travelled throughout all of Europe that summer, all the way to Istanbul." Married that summer in Morocco, the two have been together for over 60 years and enjoy three children and seven grandchildren.

After retiring from the pro tour, Barbara took a break from competing, but tennis was still very much an important part of her life and something that she shared with her children. Her son Michael and several of her grandchildren are accomplished collegiate players.

From the insistence of a friend, Barbara eventually began competing again and became an active senior tournament player. Along with numerous titles, she earned a number 2 world ranking in the 70's age group. She again was granted the opportunity to travel throughout the country and the world while competing in the sport that she has loved since childhood.

The Davidson's split their time between Florida and Wisconsin, but the Bay Area still holds a special place in Barbara's heart. She says, "That's where I grew up and I loved it there."

