

Hall of Fame Class of 2013: Mark Manning

The late Mark Manning was a true trailblazer, inspiration and a hero to many. More than just a coach, Mark used tennis as a vehicle to positively impact young people for over 30 years. His efforts made a profound difference to the tennis community and the youth in the East Oakland area.

USTA NorCal Board President, Michael Cooke says, "Mark was an outspoken advocate for the kids he worked with in the City of Oakland. You would always hear Mark saying 'Let's do this for the kids.' His rugged determination towards leading inner city youth into tennis as their 'Sport of Opportunity' helped many stay in school, complete high school and go on to college."

One of Mark's former protégés, Dale Evans, says, "One of the aspects that always stood out to all of us about Mark was his positive influence. He was a very mature person at a young age. The community trusted him to be a leader; most of the parents in the community were older than him but his leadership was so profound that they had trust and faith in him."



Dale, who now works as an Associate Teaching Pro at the Claremont Hotel Club & Spa, started taking lessons from Mark when he was just eight years old. "My father played in an adult league and knew Mark through the community tennis programs. He was my first and primary coach throughout my career," Dale explains.

Known for inspiring those around him, Mark wanted to challenge the community and teach the youth that he worked with how to break barriers and do better. His efforts were far reaching and for many of the youth that he worked with, extended beyond the tennis court. "He used tennis as a vehicle to influence positivity and progression, but he didn't stop there. He shared different aspects of life with many of us, such as the importance of school, how to manage finances, along with other fun activities, such as bowling, skating or cars," says Dale. "I can say for sure, I would not be involved with tennis now if it were not for Mark."

Mark's involvement in the tennis community included being a USTA NorCal Board Member, Diversity Committee Chair, Junior Council Chair and the Oakland City Tennis Advisory Committee. He was the first African American to be elected as president of the Board of USTA Northern California Section, and the first African American to be elected to that position from all of the 17 sections.

The many awards that Mark earned for his tireless efforts include the USTA NorCal 1992 Service to Tennis Award. This honor is considered one of the highest, recognizes significant contributions to the game of tennis over a period of many years. In 1994 Mark was honored again by the USTA for his efforts. In 2002, he received the USTA NorCal Diversity Leadership Award, for outstanding coaching, mentoring and leadership in the multicultural tennis community. The Diversity Leadership Award has recently been renamed after him. Mark has also been inducted into the Black Tennis Hall of Fame and the Castlemont High School Sports Hall of Fame.

"Mark Manning was a pioneer and true advocate of youth tennis in NorCal! Through his relentless drive to bring tennis to disadvantage kids, he showed how they could positively impact their lives," says Steve Leube, USTA NorCal Executive Director. "Mark's generosity, energy and passion for the game became the voice of tennis for those that would otherwise not be part of the game of tennis. Mark was a friend, educator and mentor; he inspired people to achieve greatness through the game of tennis."

**Mark Manning passed away in March, 2012*