

Celebration of the Life of Tennis Coach, Don Johnson “The Tennis Machine”:

July 29, 2017 - Backesto Park

City of San José unveiled the new tennis court signs at Backesto Park to honor the long-time Tennis Instructor, Don Johnson. The late Don Johnson taught thousands in various tennis programs in San José.

Coach Johnson was the founder of the Los Paseos Lobsters and the Backesto Backhanders Junior Tennis Programs in San José. Nicknamed “The Tennis Machine” Don Johnson as a tennis instructor was the face of tennis in San José from 1976 to 2014.



On July 29, USTA NorCal and the City of San Jose partnered, in remembrance of Don, to offer a free day of tennis to all at the new Don Johnson tennis Courts at Backesto Park.

In attendance was Don Johnson’s Family, representatives from the U.S. Tennis Association of Northern California and City Officials, including San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo, to celebrate the Life of Don Johnson and the unveiling of the new tennis court signs in his honor.

The late Don Johnson taught thousands in various tennis programs in San José, inspired them to be great human beings and fall in love with tennis. Don was a continuous presence at NorCal’s Bank of the West Classic Kids Day, exposing hundreds of kids who otherwise not attend to professional tennis.

Don’s hard work has did not go unnoticed. In 2003 he was inducted into the African-American Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame. In 2004 he was inducted into the United States Tennis Association Northern California Tennis Hall of Fame. In 2006 he was presented the Jefferson Award for Public Service. Also, in 2006, a documentary titled, “From Brooklyn to the Hall of Fame: The Don Johnson Story” was produced by Venkat Narayanan. In 2012, KQED awarded him the Local Heroes Award for Black History Month.

Don Johnson Event at Backesto Park:



