

**New Jersey Tennis Photographer Robert Kenas
Named Inductee to USTA Eastern's Tennis Hall of Fame, Class of 2018**

New York, N.Y., April 28, 2018 – Robert “Bob” Kenas of Marlboro, New Jersey, is being inducted into USTA Eastern’s Tennis Hall of Fame on April 28th, 2018 at the historic New York Athletic Club in Manhattan. Kenas’s induction honors his pioneering photographic contributions to the junior tennis circuit and the care and dedication he shared in chronicling the visual history of the Eastern section. Proceeds from the evening’s Hall of Fame induction event will benefit the Junior Tennis Foundation (JTF), which provides grants and scholarships for junior and adaptive players, as well as national junior tennis and learning (NJTL) organizations throughout the Eastern section. More than \$2 million has been granted to worthy programs and scholarships to junior tennis players since its founding in 1979. JTF’s generosity affords opportunities for children to attend tennis camps, sectional and national competitions, and educational workshops.

“Bob began photographing the Eastern and national junior tennis circuit in the 1980s and essentially forged a new genre of tennis photography that was getting little if any attention at the time,” said Jenny Schnitzer, Executive Director of USTA Eastern. “Bob also played an extraordinary role in chronicling Eastern’s tennis heritage and history through his photography, and for that the section owes him a debt of heartfelt gratitude.”

Bob Kenas took his first photographs of junior tennis players at the 1983 Easter Bowl, which was taking place nearby while he was vacationing in Florida. The iconic junior tournament marked the beginning of what Bob affectionately calls his “obsessive hobby” chronicling tennis through his photography. “No one else was taking pictures at the Easter Bowl and the founder of the tournament, Seena Hamilton, noticed me,” said Bob. “She asked to see my photos, thought they were good and then sent me immediately to World Tennis magazine. Before I knew it, the photos were getting published.”

Growing up in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, Bob Kenas was an accomplished athlete in his own rite, playing football, basketball, and baseball for Riverdale Country School and went on to play varsity baseball and basketball while attending Hobart College. Bob started playing tennis when he moved to the New Jersey suburb of Matawan in the 1970s. “My wife Barbara and I were bombarded with the early morning sound of rackets striking tennis balls since our home backed up to Strathmore Swim and Tennis Club,” said Bob. “Once we started playing, we were hooked.”

Bob and Barbara shared their newfound love of the sport with their children, Jennifer, Jamie and David, and taught all three how to play. “They were very little kids when we first took them to a court,” said Kenas. “Daddy and Mommy were playing so they wanted to be a part of it.” Before long, the kids got more serious with their play and Kenas weekends were often spent driving the kids to their tournaments. The family even moved to a house with a tennis court.



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Jennifer and Jamie both played varsity tennis for Matawan High School; Jennifer still holds the high school player record for matches won and went on to captain the Cornell University women's tennis team, playing #1 singles there for two years. Bob's youngest, David was a first team All-State player and won the New Jersey State High School championship. David also played and captained the men's tennis team at William & Mary College. Bob often took pictures of his children's tournament play but his "hobby" as a photographer had become more involved during David's time.

"I didn't 'watch' well in the juniors and didn't want to be one of those parents with a worried face," said Kenas. "Hiding behind a camera kept me occupied, and more importantly, prevented me from sitting there shaking my head at a lost point. I always ended up taking tons of pictures, most of which were not of David!"

Bob's photography took on a life of its own. While his son David was playing in the Eastern Tennis Association's (ETA) junior tournaments and eventually national tournaments, Bob found a niche in photographing junior tennis. Bob's photographic work at the junior tournaments led to opportunities photographing tennis professionals on the tour. Bob's photos have appeared in countless print and broadcast media outlets, including *World Tennis*, *Tennis Week* magazines and books, *USTA Magazine*, *Tennis Magazine*, The US OPEN Program, *Tennis Industry* magazine, Tennis Channel, CBS-TV, *Newsday* and the *New York Times*. His work can also be seen in Pete Sampras's autobiography.

His junior photographs appeared regularly in *Eastern Roundup*, the USTA Eastern Yearbook, *Eastern's Tennis Week*, *Tennis USA* and the *Atlantic Racket Press*, among others. For many years, he worked as USTA Eastern's photographer at the section's annual meetings and expanded his coverage to include the entire Eastern tennis scene, gaining notoriety for creating the still-treasured ETA yearbook collages that he cut and assembled by his own hand. Bob likely has the most comprehensive collection of junior tennis photographs from the '80s and '90s since no other photographers saw the need for shooting junior play at the time. As Bob's photos were published with praise and recognition, the 'pro' photographers started to enter the scene. Suffice it to say, Bob clearly paved the way for broader junior tennis coverage and eventually other sections emulated his yearbook.

As a tennis dad, Bob also had a soft-spot for the unsung heroes of these tournaments, taking photos of as many junior players as he could (regardless of achievement) as well as of parents and volunteers, whose roles were crucial at these events. "I don't think I started taking these kinds of pictures with any particular motivation other than that these were people who, like me, were obviously very involved and invested in this junior world," said Kenas. "Attending and working these tournaments was hard work and these people played a big part in making the junior tennis world go around. I felt that taking pictures of them and putting them in the collages was my way of giving many more people the feeling of being recognized, even though they weren't playing."

With all that Bob accomplished through his photography, it was not how he made his living. Bob had a broad-spectrum management career in the communications and healthcare sectors, which included a 26-year tenure at AT&T; he retired in 2009 after 10 years at Nortel Networks.

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The USTA Eastern Section, based in White Plains, N.Y., is a not-for-profit community service organization whose mission is to promote and develop the growth of tennis. The section encompasses all of New York State, Northern New Jersey and Greenwich, Conn. It is one of 17 geographic sections of the United States Tennis Association, the governing body of tennis in the United States, and supports more than 49,000 members. The section also establishes and maintains rules of fair play, high standards of sportsmanship and represents, in its jurisdiction, the programs and policies of the USTA. More information about the USTA Eastern Section is available by visiting: www.usta.com/Eastern

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