

HISTORY OF THE HOUSTON LADIES TENNIS ASSOCIATION, INC.

The first president of H.L.T.A., Ann Kuykendall, met informally with the other founders Helen Ferrin, Lulu Roemer, Clare Childers and Dot Baker in March 1964 to form what we know as the Houston Ladies Tennis Association, one of the largest and most popular ladies groups in our city. The general idea behind the founding was to provide fun and tournaments for tennis playing ladies of Houston and to promote and develop junior tennis.

A week later, the same group plus some twenty others played tennis at Memorial Park. At lunch that same day, this charter membership group planned the first big tournament, fondly known as the Bums, Sociables and Hackers. This is now our big spring tournament. One Thursday of each month was designated for round robin play and thus our fun tournaments are still played on this day.

The first Lulubelle Invitational Doubles Fun Tournament was held in October 1964. The rules called for players to dress in costumes as no players were allowed on court dressed in white. The entry fee of \$2.00 a team included hot dogs, cokes and coffee. Prizes were awarded for team and individual costumes. This tournament inspired by Lulu Roemer was a favorite for many H.L.T.A. members.

Mondays were designated as "league play" and membership grew quickly. In the fall of 1976, H.L.T.A. started a ladies doubles league with 44 teams participating in 5 divisions. By 1978, H.L.T.A. had grown to 132 teams in 7 divisions to currently over 3,500 members participating with 246 league teams in 10 divisions. The tremendously popular league covers over 1,000 square mile area.

The junior development program began immediately after H.L.T.A. was formed. The first spring and fall members were teaching 3 times a week. By 1965, the program was blossoming. A challenge ladder for girls was established and round robin play was started between top area girls and H.L.T.A. ladies. ShoeString Tennis Program, Inc., a program for the handicapped and special needs citizens was also added to the junior development program. The ShoeString Program was designed to reinforce feelings of self-worth, improve self-image and develop coordination while providing the experience of tennis fun. A telegram was received from President and Mrs. Reagan thanking H.L.T.A. for their support of this program. Annually boys and girls, ages 10-16, participate in the summer junior league. Fifty cents of each major tournament entry fee is donated to the junior development fund.

In 1965 H.L.T.A. ladies ran a National Junior Chamber of Commerce Tournament at Rice University. Many outstanding juniors in the country attended, some coming from Georgia, California, New Orleans and New York.

In August of 1980, H.L.T.A., Houston Tennis Association and the Houston Racquet Club co-hosted the National Boys 12 Clay Court Championships. H.L.T.A. members served as monitors for this tournament and actively supported it with housing and transportation.

Beginning in 1977, H.L.T.A. began contributing to the tennis facilities at the DePelchin Children's Center. A teaching program was instituted by HLTA and local pros conducted several clinics for these junior players. In 1979 H.L.T.A. gave the DePelchin Children's Center a new ball machine in addition to instructing juniors on games and drills. This same year H.L.T.A. instituted another volunteer program at the Burnett-Bayland Home for Children. A ball machine and backboard was constructed for the junior's use.

Beginning in 1980 through 1987, a Tennis Lady Award was presented annually to an H.L.T.A. member for her contributions to tennis. Those chosen for this award were Fran Smith, Rae Perkola, Dorothy Anderson, Joan Sheffield, Donna Ranslem, Donna Patterson and Una Jones.

H.L.T.A. established the Chris Evert Service Award in 1989. This award was presented to Ruth Jones for outstanding service to H.L.T.A. at the Virginia Slims Championship Tournament in

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Houston. The latest of Ruth's many contributions to H.L.T.A. is the Silver Fox Division which made its debut at the March 1989 Fun Tournament. All members fifty and over are invited to play in this new division. Twenty-two teams entered the March Fun Tournament, and Ruth Jones, Division Chairman, distributed decorated visors and pamphlets from AARP to all participants.

The Chris Evert Service Award was presented for 1990 to Mary Gaines, H.L.T.A.'s Executive Secretary since 1971. Mary's job began with H.L.T.A. when President Bea Whitfill decided running the organization was taking too much of the Board's time away from tennis. Mary's main qualification for the job, along with her more than adequate secretarial skills, was that she did not play tennis. As H.L.T.A.'s membership grew from 250 to over 3,500 members, Mary's job grew too - from collating lists to adapting to H.L.T.A.'s new computer. Mary's quiet dedication and hard work have kept H.L.T.A. running smoothly on a day to day basis over the last nineteen years. Mary somehow found the time to learn to play tennis. In fact, she learned so well she is now an "A" player. H.L.T.A. clearly owes Mary Gaines a debt of gratitude.

Leslie Bucher, past president of H.L.T.A., was presented 1991 Chris Evert Service Award. Leslie was responsible for updating H.L.T.A. with a new computer and for adding league location maps to the directory. As a fundraising project, she produced and sold the first H.L.T.A. t-shirts with profits going to the Jr. Development Fund. Leslie provided an organized leadership that focused on H.L.T.A.'s traditions and purpose.

The 1992 recipient of the Chris Evert Award was Judy Bowman, a person whose name has been synonymous with the growth of tennis in southwest Houston. Judy's was the ever smiling face behind the desk at Southwest Tennis Center who promoted H.L.T.A. to anyone who would listen. With her move to Lubbock, an era has come to an end in Houston tennis.

In 1993, the Chris Evert Service Award was presented to another outstanding Houston Tennis Lady, Harriett Hulbert. Harriett's involvement with tennis began shortly after her family moved to Houston in 1969. Harriett joined H.L.T.A. in 1970 and since becoming a member has served on the board as the Junior Development Vice-President and as the flight coordinator of the newly formed championship level in 1992-1993. Harriett's love for tennis transferred to her daughter, Ann Hulbert Hopper, who was an exceptional junior and collegiate player and local area teaching pro. Because of Ann's commitment to tennis, Harriett became involved with other Texas tennis organizations including the HTA-21 years, TTA-17 years and the USTA National Senior Women's Clay Court tournament-20 years. As a member of TTA, Harriett's responsibilities included being the Zone Chairman for 12 years. As the HTA secretary and chief "answer person", Harriett's major responsibilities have centered around coordinating and scheduling the annual Houston Coca-Cola Open and the HTA Fall Festival which are the two largest Texas tournaments.

The 1994 Chris Evert Service Award was presented to Sherry Pomykal, an individual who has made a major contribution to H.L.T.A. and the Houston area tennis community. In addition to being an outstanding tennis player, she served six years on the Executive Board for H.L.T.A. and countless hours on various tennis committees -- most recently the nominating committee. She is a tireless supporter who may be found editing and producing the yearbook one week and sorting them for mailing the next. She's manned many tournament desks, sold cookbooks, planned luncheons, collected door prizes and sold advertisement for our yearbook. Although she is no longer a member of the board, her advice is often sought out and always respected.

The 1995 recipient of the Chris Evert Service Award was presented to Bettie Hanse who previously held board positions as Head League Coordinator, Secretary, Division Coordinator and is well known for her service in many aspects of our organization.

The 1996 recipient of the Chris Evert Service Award was presented to Linda Plavidal who has served on the board for nine years, editing the monthly newsletter, reviving the fun tournaments, serving on committees and taking on any task asked of her.

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The 1997 recipient of the Chris Evert Service Award was Adelaide Fisher. Adelaide began her work with H.L.T.A. in 1984 and continues to serve as a league coordinator.

The Chris Evert Service Award for 1998 was presented to Kaye Carter, acting president of HLTA. Kaye has served H.L.T.A. for many years in many capacities - president, secretary, league coordinator and advisor to many.

H.L.T.A. was pleased to present the Chris Evert Award for 1999 to an outstanding member, Patty Ranson. Her commitment to H.L.T.A. is evidenced through her countless hours of service and willingness to help in any capacity.

Throughout each year, H.L.T.A. holds major tournaments, fun tournaments, provides monthly newsletters, league play, organizes a tennis trip and two awards luncheons. Each member of H.L.T.A. receives a copy of the Court Reporter, a monthly newsletter published by H.L.T.A. and edited by Linda Plavidal. Included in newsletters are upcoming events, league and tournament results, tennis tips from local pros, questions and answers relating to the rules of tennis. Along with the newsletter, H.L.T.A. also publishes and distributes an annual membership directory for all members.

Through the leadership of Charlotte Teeter, Community Service Chairman, H.L.T.A. expanded its charitable involvement in 1991. Boys Country/Girls Country and Fields of Dreams were two of the new charities to benefit directly from H.L.T.A.'s financial resources and volunteers.

H.L.T.A. celebrated its 35th Anniversary with a celebration tournament. The mayor of the city issued a proclamation in recognition of this event. In conjunction with our anniversary, H.L.T.A. adopted its first official logo using the colorful illustrations of a local artist. Other accomplishments for this eventful year were the additions of the USTA/H.L.T.A. Summer League, a scholarship fund for graduating senior women, and the Spirit of Tennis Award to each level of tennis. Last but not least, H.L.T.A. entered the world of cyberspace - with our own website. We have come a long way with a long list of accomplishments and contributions.

In 2000, the Chris Evert Service Award was presented to Eleanor Beebe, a coordinator extraordinaire for the past nine years. Eleanor's creative thinking gave us the slogan, "Honk if you've made your points" bumper stickers. She is the first recipient to be serenaded with a ballad by her friends and colleagues at the Awards Luncheon. Her energy, leadership and positive "can-do" attitude have been an inspiration to all.

H.L.T.A. is honored to grant Marjorie Parkerson the 2001 Chris Evert Service Award. Her many friends remember her competitive energy and leadership that were always tempered with a sense of humor and good-will. Marjorie was one of those special individuals you looked forward to sharing time with, no matter what the occasion. Her positive attitude, zest for life, and commitment to others will always be a special gift to all who knew her.

In 2002, the Chris Evert Service Award was presented to Dora Dillistone. She served on the board for six years in various capacities, including three years as President always striving to make H.L.T.A. an even better organization. The scholarship program she initiated for graduating High School girls continues to grow each year. The proclamation from the Mayor of Houston commemorating H.L.T.A.'s thirty-five year tradition in our community was only one example of her drive and determination. Her artistic ability to create presentations contributed to awarding H.L.T.A. the USTA's Texas Section Organization of the Year. She was instrumental in obtaining two coveted seats in the President's Box of the US Open (which were raffled for scholarship funds), and has been responsible for originating the first city-wide "Serve Up a Cure" Tennis Tournament to be held in October of this year. No matter what the task or issue, Dora always brought total commitment and energy to any endeavor.

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We are honored to present this year's H.L.T.A. service award to Jean Shepherd. Jean has been a coordinator at various levels and has served on the Executive board for the past 5 years. Two of those were as Head League Coordinator and two were as President.

She takes her obligations very seriously and has been known to cancel vacation plans more than once to take care of pending H.L.T.A. issues. She was responsible for updating our computer programs, spent numerous hours interviewing candidates for the secretarial position left vacant by Mary Gaines who had taken care of us for the last 30 years, has met with club owners regarding H.L.T.A. issues, has secured the raffle prize for the spring luncheon (a trip to Florida) and has had the honor of being president when email has come to H.L.T.A. This onslaught of e-mail is very time consuming and demanding.

Jean never fails to acknowledge good works done by her committees or individuals on a routine basis.

All of us who have worked with her can attest to her dedication, determination, and sense of humor, making it a pleasure to have served with her. We thank you for everything Jean --- your leadership in this organization has truly made a difference.

For 2004, we recognize and honor Terese Regnier, a cherished member who has served on the board for many years. She was A1 scorekeeper for seven years and OC flight coordinator for the past six years. She has been our resident trainer for all flight coordinator computer issues, traveling to coordinators' homes, even the most computer illiterate, to give them personal instruction and assistance. As directory chairman for three years, she cross-checked all entries in the directory, firmed up advertisements, and gave us some really snappy covers. She served as nominating committee chair for four years and has firmly and fairly offered continuity and consistency within our league. She is a valued advisor because of her good judgment and wise perspective. We recognize Terese as a voice of reason on all league issues.

Terese says that she is so grateful for the role her team, the A1 City Slickers from the Houston City Club, plays in all aspects of her life. The team has been together for about eight years, and Terese has been co-captain for four years. She is a member of the Tennis Advisory Board, President and Tournament Director of the Houston City Club Ladies' Tennis Association and indoor league captain for several years.

H.L.T.A. is a better organization because of what Terese Regnier has brought to us all. We owe her many thanks for her good spirit, dedicated commitment and her always extending helping hand.

In celebration of H.L.T.A.'s 40th anniversary, a tournament was held at Chancellors Racquet Club in May of 2004. All play was held indoors. Breakfast was served courtside to the entrants at tables decorated with 40th anniversary balloons. When members were not playing, there were other contests and activities in which to participate such as a fast-serve contest, and new styles of tennis clothes to look through. At the completion of the tournament, a lovely luncheon was served in a ballroom overlooking the pool. Prizes that were purchased by H.L.T.A. were given out to many happy ladies. It was a great day and a great way to celebrate H.L.T.A.

Lynn McKillop was awarded the Chris Evert Service Award for 2005. Lynn has been an active member of H.L.T.A. for more than 20 years. She has been a team captain for 4 years, a division coordinator for 2 years and a member of the H.L.T.A. Board for 10 years. Lynn's primary position on the Board has been serving as our Communications person. Lynn developed and maintained our first web site. She was instrumental in establishing the guidelines and criteria for our current web site. She was also involved with writing grant proposals on behalf of H.L.T.A.

Lynn is a dedicated member of H.L.T.A. and has always done what has been asked of her. Her enthusiasm and positive outlook are truly appreciated by those who know her.

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H.L.T.A. was proud and honored to present the 2006 Chris Evert Service Award to Andrea Morgan. After serving as the coordinator of the B1 flight, Andrea became Head League Coordinator in 2003. Andrea spearheaded the Spring Break Rule and other rule revisions that have led to easier and more efficient play. Andrea became President in 2004. Under her leadership a number of revisions were made to our Bylaws. In addition, Andrea led the search for a better scheduling software program, and strongly supported the design and implementation of our new website, with online member and team registration. At the end of her term as President, Andrea served ably as Parliamentarian, and chaired our Scholarship Committee. In each of her positions, Andrea's actions were always based on her sincere belief in always doing what was best for H.L.T.A. All of us owe her a great debt of gratitude for her distinguished service on our behalf.

The 2007 Chris Evert Service Award was presented to Jean Frazer in recognition of her development of an inexpensive and effective scheduling program for H.L.T.A. as well as for her outstanding work as treasurer for 2 years. She was the ideal board member. During this time, H.L.T.A. had difficulties in using the existing scheduling program. Jean, without being asked, took it upon herself to find a program that would meet all our needs as well as being cost effective. She found a program and adapted it to fit all of the scheduling requirements of H.L.T.A. She undertook the job because it was a "challenge" and "it seemed like it would be fun". The organization is indebted to Jean Frazer for this unselfish and time consuming contribution. Jean is very deserving of this honor and our thanks.

In 2008, HLTA was proud to present the Chris Evert Service Award, Woman of the Year, to Dolores Meyer.

It was approximately 1996 when she began running the North Fun Tournaments in Kingwood. The continued success of these tournaments over these many years has been a credit to her commitment and attention to detail, and her record as Site Director is a testament to her determination to instill fun and competition in all levels of tennis at Kingwood. Her enthusiasm has never waned!

Dolores exhibits the true spirit of HLTA, serving tirelessly to ensure the tournaments appear regularly on our website. She is a deserving recipient of this honor from the organization she has so faithfully supported.

The Chris Evert Service Award, Woman of the Year for 2009, was presented to Daisy Quayle.

She served on the HLTA Board for several years, and was President in 2003-2004.

In addition, Daisy has served on the Board of the Houston Tennis Association, and trained and volunteered as an instructor for the free after school tennis programs offered through HTA/NJTL for several years.

She has supported a variety of scholarship programs to raise funds for local multicultural junior tennis player grants, and commits time and resources to the Zina Garrison All Court Tennis Academy. Daisy has volunteered at many local tennis tournaments including the National Senior Women's Clay Court Championships, and is a worthy recipient of this award in recognition of her outstanding service.

The 2010 Chris Evert Service Award, Woman of the Year, was presented to Leona Kain.

Leona has played and supported tennis for over 45 years; thirteen of those as a member of HLTA. She has served on the Board for four years in various capacities, has volunteered as a League Coordinator and team captain, and is currently the captain of the B-1 'Zebras at net' in the South

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Division. In her spare time, she captains a USTA summer team, a USTA 60 and over, and also plays on two other leagues. She is a member of the Bay Area Racquet Club and is known throughout this tennis area as the 'go to person'. Ask her a question, and she will find the answer!

Leona is a deserving recipient of this prestigious Award, and we are appreciative of her service to the organization.

Bev Taylor was honored as the 2011 Chris Evert Service Award, Woman of the Year recipient. She joined HLTA in 1977, and directed volunteers at The Virginia Slims of Houston, Houston Coca-Cola Open, and numerous junior events. She is a past director of HLTA Day, and is a dedicated and committed woman to the Houston community as a whole, with a lifetime of service supporting a love of tennis and all aspects of junior development.

In 2010, the USTA awarded her the Eve F. Kraft Community Service Award before more than 600 community tennis leaders in San Diego, California.

H.L.T.A. and its programs are all organized by volunteers and one paid employee; dues are \$20.00 per year.