

FIRST SERVICE

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MIDSUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER of the EAST ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY TENNIS ASSOCIATION

The East St. Louis Community Tennis Association has received the following awards: The 2014 USTA St. Louis Event of the Year – 40 Days of Nonviolence, the 2018 Governor’s Hometown Award, the 2018 Sport Court Builders Association – Facility of the Year, the 2020 USTA MO Valley – CTA of the Year, and the 2020 USTA St. Louis – CTA of the Year.

PLAYING ‘PEEK’ TENNIS: A STORY OF INCLUSION

HOW THE VICTORY OF PROFESSIONAL TENNIS’ FIRST ASIAN MALE ROLE MODEL INSPIRED A LIFE-LONG LOVE OF THE GAME

by Coach WESLEY LAW

When Michael Chang won the French Open at the impossibly young age of 17, tennis suddenly appeared on my radar. I was only 13 years old and for the first time in my young life there was a champion who looked like me. The lack of Asian male role models in the public space instantly made him my role model.

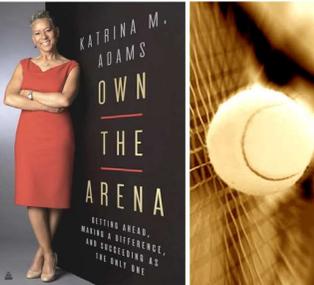
At home, we had a wooden tennis racquet but carbon fiber was now the material of choice for the rapidly evolving sport. My parents wouldn’t buy one for me so if I wanted a new racquet I’d have to earn the money myself. So when I turned 15 1/2 I got a job at a local pro tennis shop called, The Racketman where I learned how to string racquets. I must have strung



see PEEK TENNIS, PAGE 4

Coach Wesley Law (far right) poses with three talented tennis players at the net.

If you or anyone you know is interested in playing tennis either for fun or competition, come join us at the Lincoln Park courts every Saturday (kids/young adults 9am-12pm) and Sunday (adults 9-11am) during the warmer months. No equipment or payment needed, just bring yourself!



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E.S.L.C.T.A. Youth Tennis Tournament

OUR SUMMER 2023 CELEBRATION OF INTRODUCING YOUNG PEOPLE TO TENNIS

These photos which follow are selected scenes from the East St. Louis Tennis Association's 1st Annual Youth Tennis Tournament, held in late July of this year. It is both our mission and our pleasure to introduce the game of Tennis to youngsters in our community, and to their families as well!





PEEK TENNIS, CONCLUSION

hundreds of racquets throughout high school. That job paid for my first racquet and my first pair of real tennis shoes.

I was self taught and couldn't afford tennis lessons. Without surprise, I didn't make the high school tennis team so my interest in tennis slowly waned. I quickly took an interest in social causes where I developed a passion for journalism and the visual arts. A camera replaced my racquet which then led to a communications degree and a long career in the photography industry for over 25 years.

My career has taken me all over and I've witnessed so many things. I've have triumphs and I've had failures. I've become a more well rounded person from all of those experiences.

As I look back it dawns on me that my career never had the same kind of role model as I did in tennis.

Fast forward to the almost present day (before the pandemic) and I was searching for my inner child. What did I enjoy as a youngster? The answer to that question inspired my return to tennis. I picked up right where I left off. I could still string a racquet with my eyes closed and I played as if I were a teenager. Without surprise, I developed just about every arm injury you could imagine. From tendonitis to TFCC tear to shoulder impingement. During my recovery, I utilized my stringing skills to experiment with more arm friendly string combinations (hybrids) where I think I made some pretty interesting discoveries. And when the world locked down I saw it as an opportunity to focus on better technique that would prevent injuries.

I also began to play competitively for the first time and I realized that my 20+ years of learning life's lessons the hard way could have been introduced to me at a much earlier age if I had continued with tennis. Patience. Perseverance. Persistence. Planning. Learning. Seeing opportunity. Making the right decisions.

Through all the different leagues I met Coach D. I really admired his dedication, his commitment to the sport and to his community. After he started his new position at the USTA in Florida, Coach D left some big shoes to fill at ESTLCTA. I know any small contribution I can make a difference so I decided to step up. I hope to not only share the enjoyment of the wonderful game of tennis but also the skillsets needed to succeed in life.

E.S.L.C.T.A.
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