

The Raleigh Racquet Club Story

In 1968 a small group of area tennis players, led by local attorney Marshall Happer, announced an ambitious plan – to locate and build a tennis facility that could grow with the Raleigh area and meet the needs of an expanding wave of tennis players. A handful of tennis enthusiasts joined with Happer to borrow \$500 from NCNB to finance incorporation and personally underwrite initial membership solicitation. The March incorporation paper included a vision: “To build and operate the finest tennis and swim club in North Carolina and to provide a tennis center for the City of Raleigh and eastern North Carolina.”



Today the Raleigh Racquet Club (RRC) offers social and competitive tennis for some 600 members at all skill levels, from age 4 to 94. Located off Falls of the Neuse Road, the club has 25 outdoor courts, 17 of which are soft/composition, plus four permanent composition indoor courts. In the winter six courts are covered to provide additional indoor play. The RRC includes an Olympic size pool with a pool house and a clubhouse with a pro shop, café, locker rooms, and fitness center. Programs offer members of all ages the opportunity for social and complete play and to and improve in this lifetime sport, with several teaching professionals coordinating individual and group lessons, special play days, tournaments, and more.



The RRC is the club that Marshall built. Later he moved on into leadership positions in international tennis circles. However, throughout that time he continued to be an active club member, even when he was away for 17 years before returning to Raleigh in 1998, until he retired to Florida in 2005. Other founding members supported his vision and hundreds since have sustained the club. We can stand at the clubhouse deck, look out at the courts spreading out on both sides and appreciate the vision and leadership of Marshall and the others (more names below!) who created this special place. On September 29, 2018, 50 years later, the RRC celebrated the fulfillment of the initial vision.



Our Roots

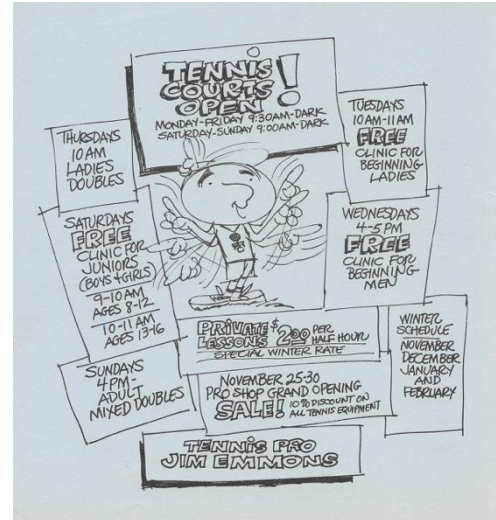
The RRC grew from a small group of frustrated tennis players who needed courts to satisfy their love of the game. For some years, the group called themselves the Raleigh Tennis Club but depended on six varsity composition courts at North Carolina State University (NCSU) as their “home” courts. Norman Chambers was the NCSU tennis coach and the Tennis Club paid to keep up the courts. The RTC did have a pro shop of sorts, the trunk of John Gonella’s car. The courts were the site of Eastern Carolina Tennis Association matches and tournaments during the summer. Kids also played at these courts over the summer with RTC member Paul Bredenberg (NCSU philosophy professor) teaching free clinics on Saturday mornings. In 1967 NCSU informed them that it needed the varsity courts in the summer and could no longer accommodate the RTC. For a while the RTC members scaled the fence to continue playing on the varsity courts, but the campus police shortly put an end to that.

Finding a place to play tennis, especially on composition courts, was a challenge in the 60s and earlier. You either played on public courts or at a country club dominated by golfing interests. But around 1962 the first tennis only club in NC was founded in Charlotte as Olde Providence, followed in 1966 by the Chapel Hill Tennis Club. Marshall, the last president of the RTC, led the initiative to establish a similar tennis club in Raleigh to be owned and operated by its membership. He was also the first president of the Raleigh Racquet Club, which at this point existed only on paper. Other officers were Jerry Robinson, vice president, secretary Jim Chavasse, and John Gonella as treasurer. Don Hicks, John McMillian, John Culbertson, Floyd Harness, Tom Dixon, John Corey, Joe Cheshire, and Norm Chambers were directors. Their task was to find a place, gather some money, and round up members.

Building Our Home

John Culbertson, another Raleigh lawyer with the RTC, scoured the area around Raleigh for a place that addressed the basic tension between location and price. He found a 40-acre dairy farm, then just outside the Raleigh City Limits, that worked. Culbertson got the owner, John Robertson, who was the Wake County Delinquent Tax Attorney, to agree to sell us 10 acres for \$4,000 per acre and grant an option for 10 more adjoining acres. John Wettach of NCNB, who had earlier financed the founding of the Chapel Hill Tennis Club, agreed to provide the new RRC with a loan in the “public interest,” rather than on the basis of our commercial risk, but conditioned on the new enterprise obtaining 125 members.

So, absolutely nothing could move forward until we obtained 125 family members to join based on a dream and with a promise that if they joined, the land could be purchased, the initial site improvements, entrance road, 6 composition courts, tennis shop, a swim house and swimming pool would be built and opened before June 1, 1969. The initial membership fee was \$350 with dues of \$45 per quarter and the first 200 members were to be designated as Charter members. (Bill Tucker was the 200th Charter member). Board member, Floyd Harness, a talented artist, who also worked as a commercial artist at the Graphic Press in Raleigh, created a new logo and brochure for the RRC.



The founding members of the Board contacted everyone they could to seek that first 125 members, especially all of the known tennis players in Raleigh. As it turned out, they generated significant community support and even a number of non-tennis folks joined and helped meet that 125-member threshold because they wanted to support the founding of the new initiative for Raleigh. NCNB provided a special \$350 membership loan which some of the new members used to join.

As the solicitation for members continued, Dick Bell, a famous Raleigh Landscape Architect, was engaged to develop a site plan, John K. Smith and Alan Mills were engaged as the Architects for the initial 12' x 24' tennis shop, and Van Sumner of Chesapeake, Virginia, provided plans for the first six composition tennis courts.

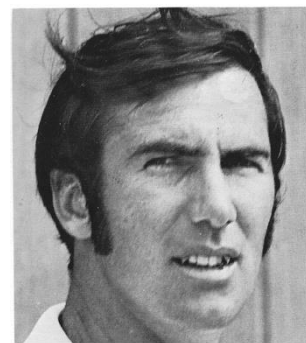
There was a City water line in the Falls of the Neuse Road, so we planned to install a 4" water line so as to have enough water for the first six courts and as many additional courts as we might be able to afford later. However, sewage was a big problem. The swimming pool could not be opened without sewage facilities, but the land is lower than the sewer line along Falls of the Neuse Road

To solve the sewer utility issue, we made an agreement with Leonard Saleeby, who was developing the Falls Church subdivision next door. He planned to install a lift station to pump sewage up to the Falls of Neuse Road. But he needed us to agree to be annexed into the City of Raleigh which would make Falls Church then adjoining so he could obtain City reimbursement for his new Falls Church streets. We agreed to annex our first 10 acres into the City upon receiving payment from Saleeby for what we estimated as 4 years of City taxes in return for the right to connect a sewer line from our proposed new swim house to his Falls Church sewer line and lift station.

NCNB relaxed their membership requirement and agreed to initiate their loan with only 80 family members which were obtained by September of 1968. John Culbertson and his law partner, Al Purrington, Jr., purchased the land and sold it to the new RRC for \$10,000 cash and a purchase money note and deed of trust for the balance of \$30,000, which they subordinated to the new \$125,000 NCNB loan. That subordination was a substantial financial risk for John and his law partner. Initially, NCNB provided us a portion of our \$125,000 loan so we could proceed with the initial site improvements including a paved entrance road, gravel parking lot, a 12' x 24' tennis shop (with no bathroom) and 6 composition courts (courts 7-12, now hard courts).

The Board of directors and others planned, surveyed, and removed the brush, not part of their original "job descriptions" but work needed to meet tight deadlines. During the site work, Board member, Don Hicks, a Professional Engineer, rode on the back of the front-end loader that cleared the site in order to save as many trees as possible.

The RRC opened for play on November 1, 1968 with 6 composition tennis courts, the small tennis shop/maintenance shed and no bathroom. Everyone was ecstatic and wanted to play all day every day. Our sole employee, Jimmy Emmons, moved from being the Teaching Pro at the Carolina Country Club to become the first RRC Pro-Manager. Jimmy taught tennis, maintained the courts, provided a very small tennis shop, and took care of any other tasks as they arose. He had graduated from NCSU where he played no. 1; he conveniently moved into a home near the club as his was a full-time position.



Jim Emmons
Club Professional

By February 1969, membership had finally risen to 125 and so NCNB permitted us to proceed and have Architects, Smith and Mills, design our swim house which was going to be half heated to provide a small winter clubhouse. Davidson & Jones was contracted to build the swim house and Carolina Pools of Sanford to build our new Olympic size swimming pool. We were under big time pressure to have the swim house and pool open by June 1 as promised to our new members. This was a time when neighborhood pools were not common, and a lot of families joined for the pool as well as the opportunity to play tennis.

Then we experienced two nightmares when we learned that:

1. City zoning required a 50' buffer from our entrance road from the northern property line with the Falls Church subdivision. The road had already been built and at one small place, it was less than 50'. (You can see it at the curve near the swimming pool filter house.) We went to the Raleigh Board of Adjustment and thankfully obtained approval.

2. Saleeby's sewer lift station was not going to be completed by June 1, 1969, so we were not going to be able use it for sewage and thus, we were not going to be able to open our swimming pool and swim house on time.

After a number of "prayer meetings" with the head of the Wake County Health Department, we obtained a very temporary permit (we said Saleeby's sewer lift station would be available "very, very soon") for a septic tank. The problem with the RRC property and, much of the land in Raleigh, is that it is red clay that will not perk and thus cannot be readily used for a septic tank. The only place on the RRC property that had any suitability for a septic tank was next to the small stream across the entrance road from the swim house (you should never have a septic tank next to a running stream). Finally, and reluctantly, the Wake County Health Department agreed to let us install that septic tank, so we could open on June 1. It might have been a year later before Saleeby's lift station was in place, so we could connect to it, but we had averted disaster, and everyone loved our new swim house (with bathrooms) and our new Olympic swimming pool with a huge concrete deck. By the time that the main clubhouse was built in 1973, the City of Raleigh had installed a sewer outfall line down Marsh Creek which runs along the east line of the RRC property so the sewer line for the clubhouse runs down to connect to it.

By the fall of 1969, it was clear that six courts were not enough to meet the members' expectations. Membership reached 167 in September 1969 (when the thoroughly vetted Bingham from the North joined). It then slowed and finally stagnated at around 190 as members no longer found enough court availability. With the advent of Open Tennis in 1968 and its expansion and increased television coverage in 1969 and ensuing years, national interest in tennis was expanding, sending more potential members to check out the club. While the club needed more courts, it could only support the expansion with more members. But people were reluctant to join with only six courts available. We thus had a "catch-22". This conundrum was resolved when 40 members each signed a \$1,000 per person limited guarantee to borrow \$40,000 from NCNB to build 4 composition and 2 hard courts (courts 1-6). The two hard courts were "Laykold" which was an acrylic finish. The base for those courts was "cold asphalt" not "hot asphalt" which was more difficult to install and promised to have less "action" and thus less problems with cracking. Thereafter membership soared, eventually creating a waiting list when the established membership limit was reached. Lots of folks who in 1968 crossed the street when they saw one of us coming to solicit them for membership suddenly began calling up and saying, "I have kept that membership application, do you have room for me now?"

By September 1970, membership reached 238 and we exercised our option on the second 10 acres, which, we did not annex into the City – so we had 10 acres in the City limits and 10 acres in the County. (Sometimes when we had parties and the neighbors complained we would tell the City Police who came to investigate that we were in the County while we

would tell the County Sheriff that we were in the City.) By May 1971, membership was 335 and in June work began on grading the new land for courts 13-18 and construction of a lighted stadium court with seating for 2,000. The original site plan was for courts 13-18 to be 2' lower than they now are, but there was so much rock that this was not feasible. We removed lots of very large rocks from the area and buried them in the area for the further courts 19-24. The soil on top of those rocks needed several years to settle before we could build courts 19-24. The highest area in the court 16-18 area was solid rock and we had to resort to very expensive removal by dynamite. We were told that there was a risk of a piece of exploding rock hitting the CP&L power lines knocking out electricity for the entire City of Henderson and making the sky look like a lightning storm, but that worst-case outcome never materialized. The club was fortunate to be created at a time when zoning and permitting are not the issues that they are today. It was also an advantage that this part of the land was still in the County and not the City.

The last six outdoor courts, 19-24, were lighted. This brought the number of courts to 25, two of which were hard surface, the remainder, composition. (The first six courts, courts 7-12, were later changed to hard courts).

Construction of the clubhouse overlooking the stadium court was also designed by John Smith and Alan Mills, and built by J.P. Goforth, a well-respected Chapel Hill large home contractor as his first commercial project and was completed in 1973. (John Smith later changed his name to John Knox and was elected as President of the Club.). Charlie Morris was president at the time. The building is of a modern design with 1850 square feet on the main floor, 1,300 on the second with a patio and deck. Izzy Green, a Charter member, who owned the Montgomery Green Company, furnished the upstairs kitchen with his custom equipment. A renovation completed in 2017, upgraded the Matchpoint Grill, pro shop area, and other areas of the clubhouse. The fitness center, also upgraded on the second floor, has well-utilized treadmills, elliptical trainers, rowing machine, weight machines, free weights, a Smith Machine and more.



The last piece was the construction of the Courthouse for four permanent indoor courts that are attached to the clubhouse. Courts 1-6 had been bubbled in the winter and there was always excess demand for these courts as players found how much they enjoyed winter tennis. This success provided the impetus to build a permanent indoor facility that could be used year-round. Getting these new courts right created challenges as the members enjoyed playing on

composition but there was concern about the use of composition indoors, so the club tried both a supreme court carpet surface and later a hard-court surface. But players tended to avoid these courts. Today, however, the courts are composition and the opportunity to play and teach tennis in the winter on ten indoor courts (8 composition, 2 hard) plus play indoors on rainy days at other times of the year is one of the club's distinguishing features.

Volunteer labor played a critical role in constructing and maintaining the club. Don Hicks supervised all the site improvements. Led by Carson Boone's (another Professional Engineer) "chain gang crew," numerous members participated in less skilled tasks, such as laying the brick walks, trimming trees, cutting the grass, and every Spring nailing down new court lines lifted by the frost and storms. Several committees brought the members into the management and operation of the club including: tennis (Jerry Robinson followed by John McMillian, Jim Brady, and Howard Crutchfield), swim (Tom Dixon, followed by Margot Richter and Jane Horgan), ladies (Pearl Green followed by Carolyn Happer), and membership (Bob Fox).

Programs Expand

The club quickly became the place for tournament tennis. In 1969, the RRC hosted the East Carolina Tennis Association Closed Tournament. Sanji Arisawa, a NCSU graduate student from Japan and club member, won the men's side over fellow member Jim Donnan, number 1 at NCSU and also the NCSU Quarterback. In his semi-finals match on a Sunday morning in the fog against Steve Wilkerson, Sanji whiffed on an overhead on match point (15-40) against him, went back and got the ball on the bounce, won the point, game, set, and match to reach the finals. Arisawa and Donnan won the doubles over members Norman Chambers and J.W. Isenhour. Mary Pinkerton of Chapel Hill won the women's singles over Liz Wagner of Durham, and Pinkerton and Wagner defeated member Mary Lou Jones of Raleigh and Jo Anne Peacock of Goldsboro in the women's doubles. Jim Donnan and Mary Lou Jones won the mixed doubles over Rolf Pinkerton and Mary Anne Pinkerton of Chapel Hill.

Sanji finished his PhD in Mathematics and Operations Research and returned to Japan to executive positions in his family firm that manufactures computer screens. He served as an executive member of the Japan Tennis Association, Japan Open in Tokyo, and also served as a member of the ATP Tour Board, which manages the ATP World Tour.

Tommy Dixon, a junior at Sanderson High School and club member, who played in the tournament went on to play at UNC, on the tour in Europe, and to settle into a tennis teaching/club management position in Cary. Norm won over 600 tennis tournaments and was the NC State Champion 38 times. He continued to play tennis at the RRC until his late 70s.

RRC also hosted the 1971 ECTA closed tournament. Sanji defeated Richard McKee of UNC for the men's singles. Richard McKee and Forest Simmons (also UNC) defeated Jim

Emmons and Tommy Dixon for the men's doubles. Mary Anne Pinkerton of Chapel Hill defeated Georgia Buechley of Chapel Hill for the women's singles. Jean Connerat and Mary Anne Pinkerton defeat Georgia Buechley and Manita Clarke of Chapel Hill for the women's doubles. Sanji and Christine Andrade of Raleigh defeated Rolf Pinkerton and Mary Anne Pinkerton for the mixed doubles.

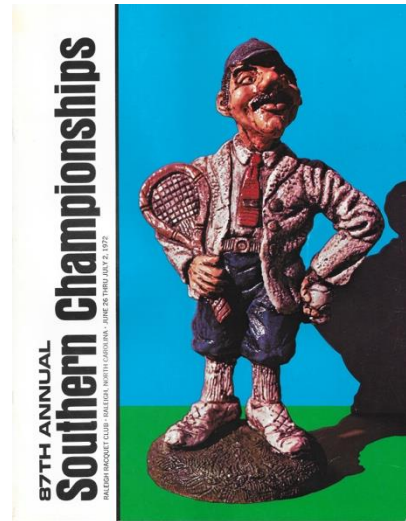
In 1971, hours after the stadium court complex was completed, the North Carolina State Closed Tennis Tournament was held at the club with Keith Stoneman (Charlotte and number 1 at UNC) defeating Sanji for the men's singles. Gene Hamilton and Keith Stoneman defeated Richard McKee and Jim Corn for the men's doubles. Bev Cansler, of Charlotte, defeated Lynn Love of Burlington for the women's singles and Bev Cansler and Nina Cloaniger defeated Mary Lou Jones and Donna Hartley of High Point for the women's doubles.

The Southern Championships was staged at the RRC from 1972-1977. In 1978 and 1979, the RRC hosted the \$25,000 American Express WRAL Championships which were telecast throughout NC.

We had successfully outbid Birmingham, AL, to move the Southern Championships to Raleigh as our first entrance into international tennis. We had \$5,000 in expense money for players and we provided private housing for them. We marketed the tournament as "The Best College Players in the World" since we had most all of the collegiate All-Americans along with a large number of players from South America and Europe.

The club went all out to host the event with 175 individuals named in the program to tournament committees. Member's kids were enlisted as ball-persons and to collect trash in exchange for drinks. Floyd Harness designed the program and others which Don Knight printed for the club.

The tournament drew a finals crowd of 2,500 spectators. We accepted all the players who applied, and the men's draw was 256.



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Raz Reid of Greenville, SC defeated Charlie Owens of Tuscaloosa, AL, 6-3, 6-2 in men's singles and 14-year-old Jeanne Evert of Fort Lauderdale, FL, beat Becky Vest of Jackson, MI, 6-1, 6-3 for the women's title. Jim Delaney and Chico Hagey defeated Armistead Neely and Jim Oceacher 7-5, 6-4 in the men's doubles final and Janice Metcalf and Jane Stratton defeated Patty Ann Reese and Betsy Nagelson 6-4, 4-6, 6-0 in the women's doubles final. Buck Archer of Shelby was runner-up to Al Doyle of New York in the men's 50 singles. Doyle had lots of wins over Bobby Riggs in senior tennis. In 1973, Archer defeated Doyle in the men's 50 singles and was ranked by the USTA at #4 in the US for 1973.

In 1971, the Southern Tennis Association Rankings for some of the players were:

Men:	Women
#1 Raz Reid	#1 Becky Vest
#2 Zan Guerry	
#3 Charles Owens	
#5 Allen Morris	

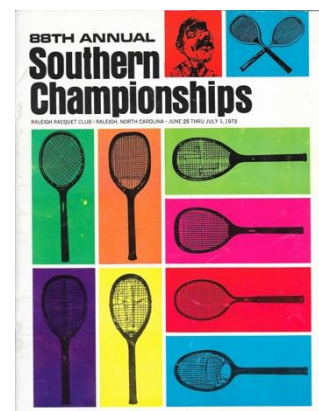
Note: (Jeanne Evert was from Ft. Lauderdale FL which is a separate Section of the USTA, so she was ranked in the Florida Section Rankings as #2 behind her sister, Chris.)

In 1971, the USTA National Rankings for some of the Championship's players were:

Men:	Women:
#17 Zan Guerry	#15 Marita Redondo
#27 Raz Reid	#16 Jeanne Evert
#28 Charles Owens	#21 Becky Vest
#32 Neely Armistead	#22 Laurie Fleming
#38 Sashi Menon	
#38 Fred McNair	

1973: 88th Southern Championships (\$5,000 Prize Money)

Tom Edlefsen of Los Angeles, CA (ranked 26 in the US) defeated Fred McNair of Chevy Chase, MD (ranked #39 in the US) 6-3, 6-4 to win the \$1,000 first prize. 15-year-old Jeanne Evert of Fort Lauderdale, FL (ranked #14 in Women's US ranking) beat Donna Ganz of Miami Beach (ranked #9 in the 18s), 6-4, 5-7, 6-2 for the women's title.

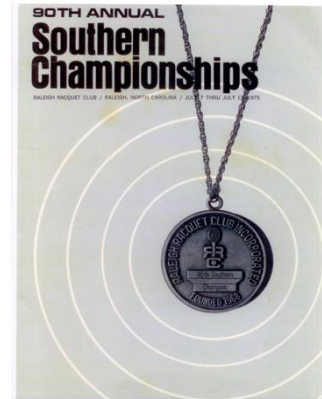


1974: 89th Southern Championships (\$7,500)

Trey Waltke of Los Angeles CA defeated Mike Cahill of Waukesha WI 3-6, 7-6, 6-3 to win the men's singles and the \$1,000 first prize. 16-year-old Jeanne Evert of Fort Lauderdale FL beat Jodi Appelbaum of Miami FL 6-1, 6-4 for the women's title and the \$750 first prize.

1975: 90th Southern Championships (\$5,000)

Hank Pfister of Bakersville, CA defeated Sashi Menon of India 6-3, 6-3 to win the men's singles and the \$1,000 first prize. 17-year-old Jeanne Evert of Fort Lauderdale FL beat Diane Desfor of Long Beach, CA 6-3, 6-1 for the women's title and the \$750 first prize.



Billy Brock of Norfolk, VA and Tommy Dixon of Raleigh, NC defeated Sashi Menon of India and Chico Hagey of La Jolla, CA 6-4, 6-3 for the men's doubles title. Mary Hamm, of Mt. Pulaski, IL and Diane Desfor of Long Beach, CA d. Ann Etheridge of Birmingham, AL and Jodi Appelbaum of Miami Beach, FL 2-6, 6-3, 6-1 for the women's doubles title.

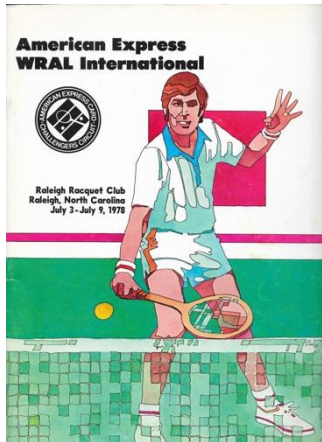
1976: 91th Southern Championships (\$15,000)

Terry Moor of Monroe LA defeated Mark Meyers of New Orleans LA 6-3, 6-2 to win the men's singles and the \$2,000 first prize at the Southern Championships. Lynn Epstein of Miami Sandy Stap 6-4, 6-1 for the women's title and the \$1,000 first prize. John James and Marcello Lara defeated Rick Fagel and Francisco Gonzalez 6-3, 6-4 to win the men's doubles championships. Paula Smith and Cindy Thomas defeated Diane Desfor and Gretchen Galt 6-2, 6-4 for the women's doubles.

1977: 92nd Southern Championships (\$15,000)

Terry Moor of Monroe LA defeated Zan Guerry of Lookout Mountain TN 6-4, 7-6 to win the men's singles at the Southern Championships. Nancy Richey defeated Kate Latham 6-1, 6-2 for the women's title. Marcello Lara and Armistead Neely defeated Zan Guerry and John James 6-3, 7-6 to win the men's doubles championships. Diane Desfor and Gretchen Galt defeated Kate Latham and Paula Smith 6-2, 6-3 for the women's doubles.

In 1978 the American Express WRAL International was held at the RRC. It returned in the next year.



1978: American Express WRAL Championships (\$25,000)

In the singles finals, Mike Cahill defeated William Prinsloo 6-3, 3-6, 7-6. In the doubles final, Francisco Gonzales and Chris Sylvan defeated Bill Csiokay and John Sadri 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

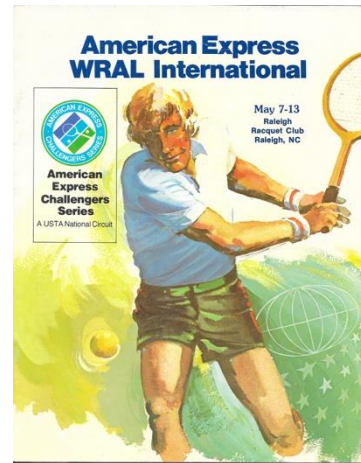
1979: American Express WRAL Championships (\$25,000)

In the singles finals, John Sadri defeated Charles Owens 5-7, 6-2, 7-5. In the doubles final, Jeff Austin and Billy Martin defeated Cliff Letcher and Chris Lewis 6-2, 7-5. Sadri's success on the American

Express Challengers Circuit was enough to qualify him for entry into the Grand Prix.

In January of 1980, John Sadri defeated Colin Dibley in the semifinals of the Australian Open and then lost to Guillermo Vilas in the finals 7-6, 6-3, 6-2.

In 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989, the Club hosted a \$25,000 USTA Challenger Series tournament sponsored by Wachovia and promoted by Neill McGeachy of Hickory.



In 1973 Bobby Riggs, looking to earn money, avowed that the best women could not beat a 55-year-old man (albeit a Wimbledon singles, doubles, and mixed doubles winner in 1939). Riggs first challenged and defeated Margaret Court in a battle of the sexes which forced Billie Jean King to accept his later \$100,000 challenge which was staged on September 20, 1973, in the Houston Astrodome. King won 6-4, 6-4, 6-3.

Neil Amdur of the *New York Times* said: "In an atmosphere more suited by a circus than a sports event, the 29-year-old Mrs. King ended the bizarre saga of the 55-year-old hustler, who had bolted to national prominence with his blunt putdowns of women's tennis and the role of today's female."

Mrs. King, a five-time Wimbledon champion and the most familiar face in the women's athletic movement, needed only 2 hours 4 minutes to reaffirm her status as one of the most gifted and tenacious competitors in sport, female or male. A crowd of 30,492, some paying as

much as \$100 a seat, watched the best-three-of-five set struggle, the largest single attendance ever for a tennis match. Millions more (48 million estimated) viewed the event on national television (television announcers were Howard Cosell, Rosie Casal and Gene Scott). The match also was seen in 36 foreign countries via satellite.

Most important, perhaps for women everywhere, Billy Jean convinced skeptics that a female athlete can survive pressure-filled situations and that men are as susceptible to nerves as women.”

Of course, the RRC had to have its own *Battle of the Sexes* (without monetary rewards). Aging and aged men (over 50) were pitted against young women (barely 30) with accomplished skill. Marcia Bingham, quoted in the newspaper regarding the contest, declared “One thing I know for sure. Women are as smart, and they are as capable as men. The problem is that we have long been told to be careful of the male ego and it is this attitude we have to overcome.” The lineups for the day were:

Max Warlick vs Joan Cremin
Allen Rodeheffer vs Ginny Gada
Frank Pankotay vs Pearl Greene
H.T. Conner vs Ann Taylor
Floyd Harness vs Billie Tucker
Mary Lou Axburg vs Howard Cohen

Jim Brady vs Bonnie Kress
M. W. Stubbs vs Margot Richter
Frank Lane vs Marcia Bingham
Jim Chavasse vs Becky Williams
Frank Dupree vs Mary Ann Bass
Izzy Green vs Betty Fitzgerald



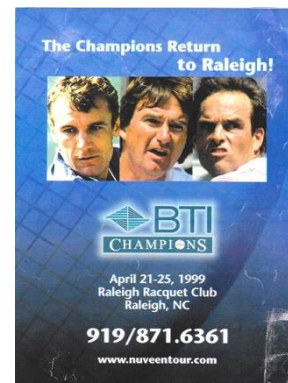
Unfortunately, the results are lost to history, or so it has been said.

Marshall’s contributions to the RRC continued after his departure in his continued communication with the club’s leadership and through his wife Karen Scott Happer. Karen was the Tournament Director of the Federation Cup Tie between the United States and Croatia in 1999. She brought the Fed Cup World Group



Quarterfinals to the Raleigh Racquet Club when war broke out in Croatia requiring a last-minute move. The US was led by Monica Seles and Chandra Rubin. In the contest the USA won all 5 matches. The Cup is the premier international team competition in women's tennis. The national and international exposure for the Tie, which was telecast on ESPN, brought attention to the club, its facilities, and staff and to the City of Raleigh. Karen also promoted the 1998, 1999, and 2000 BTI Champions bringing them to Raleigh.

In 1998-2000 Jimmy Connors Tour senior tournaments came to the RRC. BTI Champions (Johan Kriek, Mansour Bahrami, Peter Fleming, Eddie Dibbs, Tim Wilkison, Mel Purcell, Jimmy Connors, Guillermo Vilas, John Lloyd) came to the event with over 20,000 spectators viewing the matches over several days. A pro-am title was won by Andy Andrews' team of Marshall Happer, Charlie Jamerson, Billy Trott, Gary Contrell and Bo Winn. Jimmy Connors won in 1998 and 1999 and John McEnroe won over Mats Wilander the last year.



Tennis in North Carolina reports that USTA league tennis began in the 1980s and gathered momentum in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Players enjoyed playing with those of a similar age and skill (NTRP) level. At the RRC Linda Clayton was especially active in building teams and was recognized as the "Queen of Courts in 2000 by *Tennis Magazine*. She took many teams to the states and has continued to captain teams after she quit playing. Mike Leonard took the ladies 3.5 team to nationals in Palm Springs in the early 1990s where they came in 5th or 6th in the nation. Members of the team included Cindy Wilfong, Debbie Hildebran, Wanda Weiland, Susan Bashford, Pat Jones, Christy Turner, Paula Bachman and Laurie Martin.

The USTA awards a "gold" ball to winners of its national tournaments which are divided into age groups. Silver and bronze are awarded for second and third place. Demonstrating the adage that tennis is the sport for a lifetime, the club's Jim Chavasse and Tio Campanile have won gold balls while in their 90s. Jim, RRC member number 3, won 3 gold balls (USTA Men's 90 National Clay Court Championships doubles 2004, '09 and '12) plus three silver. Overall Jim collected over 200 winner or finalist trophies. Tio is a late starter who has won three gold balls (USTA Men's 90 National Clay Court Championships singles and doubles 2017, USTA Men's 90 Grass Court Championships doubles 2018) plus two silver. Other club members with national titles are Michael Stewart and the club's Director of Tennis Paul Goode.

The club's social atmosphere was fostered by the famous RRC O&Q (oysters and bar-b-que), initiated on a cold January day unfit for tennis in 1971 and continued for many years thereafter. Rufus Smith, a farmer from Knightdale and a famous local BBQ cook, was hired to build a special pit of concrete blocks in the gravel parking lot near the swim house. The Club provided the volunteer labor and it became a labor of love. Each year we cooked four to eight

100+-pound hogs on green wood coals. The first year we assembled a group of members with chain saws to cut enough green hickory and white oak to cook the hogs. However, it was such a tough job, we thereafter hired Rufus to cut the wood on his farm in Knightdale.

The format and schedule were:

Friday Afternoon: Help Rufus build the concrete block pit in the parking lot. It would be about 2' high with a wire bed stretched across the blocks to hold the hogs. One of us would also arrange to pick up the 4-8 whole hogs (125-150 pounds each) and deliver them to Rufus who would use his axe to split the backbones, so the hogs would lay out flat on the wire bed initially with skin side up.

Friday Midnight: Put the hogs on the wire beds in the pit and start the separate wood fires for the green wood to begin making wood coals to sprinkle under the hogs in the pit. We learned that when cooking such a large piece of meat, the heat cannot be so hot that you can't place your hand between the coals and the meat or you will just burn the outside and never cook it through.

Also at midnight, we would crack the first keg of beer.

This would go on all night. Some of us would alternate catching a nap now and then while helping Rufus keep the wood fires going and sprinkling the wood coals underneath the hogs. It always took around 14 hours to fully cook the hogs and after about 7 hours, the aroma would be incredible.

Saturday Noon: Turn over the hogs with the skin side down for 2 more hours. Bring out 15-25 bushels of fresh oysters from the coast. We would build another wood fire in the parking lot with concrete blocks on the sides and tin on the top which would get really hot. After the oysters were washed we would put them on the hot tin and cover them with wet burlap which would create steam to cook the oysters. So, everyone could have steamed oysters for lunch. Families and children would fill the parking lot to eat lunch and inspect the hogs which now had an even better aroma.

Saturday 2 PM: Began the "Deboning Committee" ritual. The Deboning Committee was limited to MDs and Rufus – no one else permitted. The Deboning Committee would take one hog at a time, all of which are now fully cooked, and remove all the meat and put it into a number of wooden tubs. The truth be told, the MDs did a bit of sampling as



they worked just to be sure the hogs had been smoked and cooked to perfection.

Saturday 4PM: Rufus had two cutting boards to chop up the meat so there was a mixture of all the meat from each hog and then Rufus would pour on and mix in the secret hot butter-pepper-vinegar BBQ sauce that is famous in eastern NC.

Saturday 5 PM: We had catered the Cole slaw, Brunswick stew, hush puppies, iced tea (plus we still had beer) have a feast while our Blue Grass Band would appear to entertain us.

The O&Q got to be so popular that one year we had over 500 people and had to move it to the Raleigh Police Club. Before RRC had the bubble for winter play, the O&Q was the most important thing that happened each winter.

Contributions to Tennis

RRC members have made substantial contributions to the local, state, and national organizations that support tennis. Four members have been USTA NC Presidents: Marshall Happer (1973-74), Cy King (1989-90), Paula Hale (2002-03), and Billy Trott (2016-17). Marshall (1976-77), Charlie Morris, and Paula (2015-16) have been President of the USTA Southern.

Marshall was an outstanding junior player playing collegiate tennis at UNC. He directed adult and junior tournaments and organized the Southern Satellite Circuits as well as the USTA National Circuit. He was a member of the USTA Executive Committee, Administrator (chief operating officer) of the Men's Tennis Council and the USTA Executive Director. Happer was inducted into the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame in 1981, the Southern Tennis Hall of Fame in 1995, the Kinston-Lenoir County Hall of Fame in 2010 and the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame in 2014.



The club's Charles Morris was awarded the Southern Tennis Association's Jacobs Service Bowl in 1983 for his "major contributions to Southern Tennis over a period of years." This is the most prestigious award given by the STA. Charlie was an atypical tennis volunteer. He was not a player with a pedigree but one who simply loved the game and was always willing to help and did so for 20 years. He was the RRC president from 1972-74 when the clubhouse was designed and constructed. He was treasurer of the NCTA, served on the board of the North Carolina Tennis

North Carolina Tennis NEWS
P.O. Box 10020, Greensboro, N.C. 27408
VOLUME 24 NO 1 JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1983

Charles Morris Awarded Jacobs Bowl

A TRIBUTE TO CHARLES MORRIS
by Dr. Wilhelm

When Charles Morris received the 1983 Jacobs Service Bowl Award, all of us who have worked with him found it well-deserved and a proper acknowledgment. I frequently, however, find it hard to think of him as anything other than a "big heart" who has been a major force in the development of tennis in this state. I explained that to Mary Allen, Morris' widow, and she graciously explained to me what it is that made him so special. It is not his tennis ability, but his willingness to give of himself to help others. It is his ability to see the needs of the organization and to do what he can to meet them. It is his ability to see the needs of the individual and to do what he can to meet them. It is his ability to see the needs of the community and to do what he can to meet them. It is his ability to see the needs of the world and to do what he can to meet them.

Charles Morris, of Raleigh, was recognized for his major contributions to Southern Tennis over a period of 20 years. He was named the 1983 Jacobs Service Bowl Award recipient by the Southern Tennis Association on January 15, 1983. "A good man to have on your side," Morris' organization was being made public to the first. Good people with whom organization like tennis, and more important, the STA, can count on to help them in their efforts to provide a large percentage of their needs.

The 1983 Jacobs Service Bowl went to Charles "Big Heart" Morris. This year's recipient isn't even a big name, a household or a favorite for that matter, but he should be proud of the recognition that he earned through a career of service to the sport. He was named the 1983 Jacobs Service Bowl Award recipient by the Southern Tennis Association on January 15, 1983. "A good man to have on your side," Morris' organization was being made public to the first. Good people with whom organization like tennis, and more important, the STA, can count on to help them in their efforts to provide a large percentage of their needs.

The most prestigious award given by the Southern Tennis Association is the Jacobs Bowl. It was first presented in 1962 to the player who was the Southern Tennis Open Champion. A few years later it was changed to be awarded to other people during the previous championship. It is given to the player who has made a major contribution of service to the STA over a period of years. Charles Morris of Raleigh is this year's recipient - a well-deserved honor. He takes the credit of other successful Jacobs Award winners who have received the Jacobs Bowl. Alan Morris in 1976, and Marshall Happer in 1979, organizations, Charles Morris?

Morris receives congratulations from Billard (bottom of photo) and... President of Southern Tennis Association

Foundation, was inducted into the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame in 1993 and the Southern Tennis Hall of Fame in 2000.

Paula Hale was a recent President of the club. She was also President of both the North Carolina Tennis Foundation (2004-5) and the Southern Tennis Association (2015-16). She has been Chair Southern Tennis Foundation and was also awarded the Jacobs Bowl. At the USTA Paula has been Chair of the Community Tennis Association Committee, Chair of the Evaluations Committee, Council Chair, and Chair of the Section Delegates Committee. She also served on the USTA Nominating Committee.

A number of RRC members have had the distinction of having been selected to the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame including

May Lou Jones (1979)
Marshall Happer (1981)
Norman Chambers (1987)
Charlie Morris (1993)
Jerry Robinson (1994)
J.W. Isenhour (1995)
Andy Andrews (2003)
Cy King (2005)
Tommy Dixon (2007)
Billy Trott (2017)
Paula Hale (2018)

J W., who has the NCSU tennis facility named for him, started a youth development program at the RRC that continues to this day.

The Raleigh Abilities Tennis program, which is for individuals with intellectual disabilities, was started at RRC. The club's Allan Goldberg has served as head coach for many years leading 21 other coaches. RRC provides facilities and has hosted many clinics for these athletes. Abilities Tennis NC (the Raleigh Clinics are a benchmark program) was recognized as the top adaptive tennis program at the 2018 US Open. The Alan and Lynn Goldberg family was recognized in 2017 as the USTA North Carolina Family of the Year Award given by J. Blount and Dargan M. Williams to recognize the contribution of the state's families to tennis in North Carolina.

As a large, central facility the Racquet Club has had numerous tennis professionals that have tried to help us play better tennis and advance the interests of the club. Besides Jimmy Emmons some were Jim Corn, Bobby Heald (who went on to be the head pro at McGregor Downs); J.W. Isenhour, Jerry Robinson, Jr., Tommy Dixon, Jack Blankenhorn, Dan Weant (who is

at Prestonwood in Cary), Michael Leonard, Marc Blouin, James Catenis, and Paul Goode our current Director of Tennis.

In 2017 Joe Wilkerson joined the club as its current manager. Joe had been in the Health and Racquet Sports Club industry for over 18 years. He has experience as a Tennis Professional, Junior Tennis Director, Adult Tennis Director, Tennis Director, and General Manager. He comes to us from Cincinnati, OH Where he was a General Manager for Midtown Health.

For many of us the opportunity to play the game we love at this special place has been one of our signal life choices. The club has impacted where and how we spend some of our leisure time, who many of our friends are, and for some even where we chose to live. Further the members are proud not only of having a role in creating and sustaining this recreational facility but also beyond as the RRC is an important tennis facility for supporting the growth and development of tennis for Raleigh and beyond. We look forward to the next 50 years, or some part thereof.



This history is informed first by the memories and materials provided by Marshall Happer. It has been augmented by information from numerous others who were here during our first 50 years. Despite our best efforts, however, we recognize that this story is incomplete as there is not one but hundreds of stories of members' memories of this unique club. As new material is provided we will incorporate it as part of our ongoing story. For those interested in the larger context of tennis in North Carolina we recommend the North Carolina Tennis Foundation's [Tennis in North Carolina](#).