



## E-Newsletter | July 2015

### Tennis Greats

Recently, Serena Williams won her 20th Grand Slam trophy in women's tennis. She follows in a line of women's greats in tennis. In this month's e-newsletter, we briefly profile a number of giants in American women's tennis: Althea Gibson, Billie Jean King, Chris Evert, Martina Navratilova, and Serena Williams.

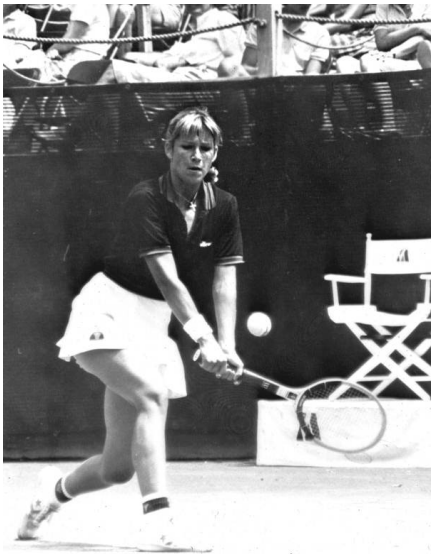


Althea Gibson

Althea Gibson, a renowned athlete in a number of sports, was given a tennis racquet at age thirteen. In 1942, at age 15, she won the first tennis tournament that she entered. Gibson broke the color barrier in tennis by becoming the first African-American woman to play and win at Wimbledon and the first African-American to win the French and U.S. Open titles. After tennis, she took up golf and became the first African-American to compete on the women's professional golf tour. The winner of 11 Grand Slam titles, Gibson has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

The 1973 "Battle of the Sexes" was a tennis tournament won by Billie Jean King (her opponent was Bobby Riggs). The winner of 39 Grand Slam titles, King took up tennis at the age of eleven. King was well recognized: she was the leader of the effort to establish the Women's Tennis Association, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Another exceptional tennis great and the winner of 18 Grand Slam titles, Chris Evert won her first of seven French Open titles in 1974. She retired with the highest win percentage recorded in tennis. Evert is also well-remembered for the many matches she played against Martina Navratilova. She has been inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.



Chris Evert

Martina Navratilova learned to play tennis in her native Czechoslovakia. During the U.S. Open tournament in 1975, she defected to the U.S; she was 18 years old. Billie Jean King has called Navratilova the greatest singles, doubles and mixed doubles player who ever lived. At the time of Navratilova's retirement, she had won 18 Grand Slam singles titles, 31 Grand Slam women's doubles championships and 10 Grand Slam mixed doubles. A breast cancer survivor, she is a strong fitness advocate and today she still plays tennis and competes in triathlons.

In 1995, Serena Williams became a professional tennis player at age 14, following in the footsteps of her highly regarded sister Venus Williams, who is still active as a tennis professional.

Currently ranked number one in women's tennis, Serena won her 20th Grand Slam title in June 2015, ranking her the third highest in the number of such titles. Serena began playing tennis at the age of three and won her first professional tournament in 1999. She has many interests outside of tennis including supporting schools in Kenya and she designs jewelry, accessories, and apparel.

Women from all walks of life have made and continue to make contributions to our culture. We are proud to continue telling their stories.

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## **Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America**

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