

Hall of Fame Induction of Winnie Hatch and Sharon Hummers Induction Speeches

February 11, 2009
Canoe Brook Country Club.

At the Women's 40+ and 60+ Nationals at Canoe Brook Country Club, February 11, 2009, Sharon Hummers and Winnie Hatch were inducted into the Platform Tennis Hall of Fame. Hall of Famers Bob Brown and Steve Baird delivered the induction speeches. Congratulations to Sharon and Winnie, as well as thanks for their many contributions to the sport.



EDWINA (WINNIE) WORTH HATCH

Induction into the Platform Tennis Hall of Fame

The APTA Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have achieved distinction in the play of platform tennis and who have also contributed to the growth and development of the game. Winnie Hatch surely passes this test.

Winnie is a 14 times National Senior Champion and has been a finalist 9 other times. She is #2 on the list of women with senior championship titles. She and her partner Sharon Hummers dominated the women's 50s during the 1990s. Between 1992 and 2002, they won 7 championships and were finalists 3 other years. Winnie has also won championships in the Women's 60+ (2), Mixed 50+ (3) and Mixed 60+ (2).

Winnie is a gracious champion and a wonderful ambassador for the sport. Although fiercely competitive, she always enjoyed playing and being around the game more than winning. Tournament directors know that she is the one to call if they need teams for an event. If she's available she will play, and if not she will help recruit teams.

In the early 90s interest in the women's 50+ National Championships was waning. Winnie Hatch, with her friend and partner Sharon Hummers took over the event and revitalized it. They moved it to Long Island, convinced all their friends to play and again made it a significant event. Even after others took over the event, Winnie continued to feel responsible for it. In 2003 when the committee was having trouble recruiting someone to run the 50+s, she again assumed responsibility for the event, found it a new home and found a sponsor. Today the women's 50+ championships is a successful and vibrant event, thanks to her efforts.

Winnie is a well-respected advocate for women's paddle. She was a member of the women's players committee, the governing body for women's paddle for over 15 years. And she has long advocated for equal funding and visibility for women's events, including the nationals and senior women's events. She was on the 1999 Nationals committee and ran the women's president's cup. She was a role model and mentor for a generation of women including future champions Bobo Delaney, Tonia Mangan, Patty Hogan and Cindy Prendergast.

Winnie believes in fair play and is not afraid to speak her mind about issues that concern her. She has been frustrated with lack of enforcement of the foot fault rules, and over the years she has pushed the APTA board for better enforcement of the rules, written letters to PTM and worked to get roving line judges at national events.

Locally Winnie has been introducing people to paddle for over 30 years, from her early days of playing at the Apple Club in NYC to recruiting women for paddle matches and interclub leagues on Long Island. She has run clinics for adults and kids. For many years she was the networker and go-to person in the area for anyone wanting to promote paddle in the Hamptons and Suffolk county.

Winnie Hatch is a tireless promoter of platform tennis, having introduced hundreds to the game over the years. She exemplifies the notion of "...giving back to the game."

And now she is the recipient of the APTA's highest honor, the Platform Tennis Hall of Fame award to Winnie Hatch.

Stephen W. Baird
Deidre Redden
February 11, 2009

SHARON K. HUMMERS
Induction into the Platform Tennis Hall of Fame

We all remember how we were introduced to this phenomenal sport of platform tennis. Sharon Hummers' introduction was the result of the efforts of a tennis friend, Carol Konnor, who wished to get her "couch potato" husband into some form of athleticism. This was in the late 70s when platform tennis was booming. Carol heard about platform tennis, and since her back yard was not large enough for a tennis court she thought that a "paddle court" would fit and that the sport would be simple enough for her husband to learn. The construction was approved, and the girls were at it, certainly playing more than Mr. Konnor.

Another event sparked further interest. A male friend heard about the finals of the Tribuno Tour being contested at Forest Hills, and he urged Sharon to make the trip and be a spectator. That experience sold her. This was more than a back yard exercise. This was really a challenging sport.

She began entering tournaments and, in a few years, she became so proficient at the sport that she qualified for the Region I Women's Presidents cup team. She continued to play locally on Long Island and was dominant in many women's and mixed events.

On the national scene, for almost two decades, she has been a championship titleholder in the Women's Senior Nationals, starting with the 50+ title in 1991. That began a run of six 50+ titles from 1991 to 1996; and ten years later, in 2001, she again won the 50+ Nationals. In the 60+ age group, she has been a champion three times and a finalist in all of the years from 2000 to 2006. Now eligible for the 70+ age group, she has won four consecutive titles. Also, add in two Senior Mixed titles in 1998 and 1999. The record shows that she has won more Senior National titles than any other woman, a total of 17 gold medals, and with a wide variety of partners. And finally, very importantly, her behavior on the court, her sportsmanship and respect for opponents and her partner has always been exemplary.

Not all of her credentials for election to the Hall of Fame are on the court, however. Sharon has been an officer of the Long Island Platform Tennis Association, tournament director of the Women's National Championships in 1992 and 2002, and an active participant in the Long Island women's platform tennis league. When four courts were donated to the Village of Garden City, she was involved with many residents who sought out her expertise and teaching ability to learn how to play. She gave many hours of her time in instruction and promotion of the game and has excellent teaching skills, particularly for novices desiring to learn the basics of the game.

The Hall of Fame charter states that recipients must demonstrate a high level of integrity, sportsmanship, and consideration for others and thus earn the respect and admiration for their endeavors in platform tennis. Our honoree fits that description perfectly.

And now, she is the recipient of the APTA's highest honor, the Platform Tennis Hall of Fame award to Sharon K. Hummers.

Robert A. Brown
Charles E. Vasoll
February 11, 2009