

Bob Brown Retires From The APTA Hall of Fame Nominating Committee

The Seniors tour legend hands off the torch

BY NINDY PIKE

There are certain names in the platform tennis world that everyone recognizes. Bob Brown is one. His staying power is impressive—the oldest player to win a National title—but it is his ability to foster growth and change in the sport that is just as impressive. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1993 but has been accruing so many titles since then he may need to be inducted again. But just as impressive as his 21 gold and 18 silver National Championship medals is his service and commitment to the game.

Brown has always been affiliated with the sport and the APTA in one way or another since he started playing over 40 years ago. His time as the Chair of the APTA Hall of Fame Committee and the Platform Tennis Museum and Hall of Fame is worth noting. All told, Brown has been at the helm of the committee for 20 years total. He spent ten years as the Chair of the Honor Award Committee. The Honor Award became the Hall of Fame Award in 1996, at Brown's suggestion. There was a period when neither award was active, but the Hall of Fame Committee remedied that, by inducting a group of deserving nominees at one time. Brown was a great proponent of this movement. Under his chairmanship, 46 individuals (of a total of 79) have been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame Committee is tasked with reaching out to membership for nominations for distinguished service and achievement. The committee then looks over the nominations, keeping all of the information confidential. The HOF Committee then recommends a worthy candidate to the APTA Board. A sixty percent approval vote is needed for a nomination to pass. "It is not easy to make it into the Hall of Fame," Brown confessed.

It's not easy to leave the committee, either. It seemed whenever Brown took leave of the APTA Board someone would find a way to bring him back into the fold. His understanding of the tradition of the sport and his experience in the game and with the organization were always in demand.

He was nominated for the Hall of Fame while sitting as the chairman. "They snuck up on me!" Brown said, with a smile. Just three years ago, he was able to do the same thing to then-APTA President Tim McAvoy. "We always try to keep the nominations secret. That one was particularly tough!"

Once the nominees are selected, they are told of their honor before they are announced at the Awards Ceremony, usually held the Friday night of the APTA Men's and Women's Nationals. This was deemed a necessary step, in order for the nominee(s) to prepare speeches and get measured for the jacket (for the men) and to size the jewelry (for the women).

Brown recently turned the Hall of Fame Committee Chair over to Steve Baird, a 1999 Hall of Fame inductee. Never one to sit still, Brown will continue as Chairman of the Platform Tennis Museum and Hall of Fame, an entity dedicated to commemorating the history of the sport, and run separately from the APTA.

His other platform tennis commitments include representing Fox Meadow in the Westchester league. He also plans to compete in the APTA Men's 145+ Nationals with Doug Barrow, in an effort to grab their 2012 title back.

The platform tennis community owes a debt of gratitude to Bob Brown for his dedication to the Hall of Fame process and to the sport for all posterity's sake. ■

