

**Former Princeton Men's Varsity Tennis Coach David Benjamin
Named Inductee to USTA Eastern's Tennis Hall of Fame, Class of 2018**

New York, N.Y., April 28, 2018 – David A. Benjamin, former Princeton University Men's Varsity Tennis coach and former executive director and CEO of the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA), the governing body of collegiate tennis, is being inducted into USTA Eastern's Tennis Hall of Fame on April 28th, 2018 at the historic New York Athletic Club in Manhattan. Proceeds from the evening's Hall of Fame induction event will benefit the Junior Tennis Foundation (JTF), which provides grants and scholarships for junior and adaptive players, as well as national junior tennis and learning (NJTL) organizations throughout the Eastern section. More than \$2 million has been granted to worthy programs and scholarships to junior tennis players since its founding in 1979. JTF's generosity affords opportunities for children to attend tennis camps, sectional and national competitions, and educational workshops.

"David Benjamin's innovation and ingenuity helped transform college tennis," said Jenny Schnitzer, Executive Director and COO, USTA Eastern. "College tennis would not be the strong and thriving enterprise it is today without David's 36 years of leadership."

Benjamin was born in Greenwich Village and spent his childhood in Flushing, Queens, and Great Neck, Long Island. Benjamin established himself as a formidable and motivated junior player and an exemplary student. He attended and played varsity tennis for Harvard University. In 1964, during his sophomore year, Benjamin's tennis coach, Jack Barnaby, asked if he would be interested in going to Togo, West Africa in the summer: the US State Department was looking for someone to coach the national tennis teams of Togo, Nigeria, and Ghana. "I first thought he was joking and asked 'Where's Togo?'" said Benjamin. "My coach thought of me because he knew I was fluent in French and that was needed for this assignment. All of the sudden, I was going to Togo to coach at the age of 19."

Benjamin ultimately captained the Harvard varsity team in his senior year to an undefeated season and the Ivy League title while graduating with high honors. But Benjamin initially did not envision a career in tennis and continued his studies at Trinity College, Cambridge University, receiving a bachelor's and master's degree in English while playing on its varsity lawn tennis team and the varsity court tennis squad, and then returned to Harvard where he attained a Ph.D. in the History of American Civilization.

In the winter of 1973, Benjamin went back to West Africa on another State Department mission. Benjamin joined forces with Eve Kraft to set up a special project between the State Department and the USTA, and for two years he served as the first administrator of the USTA International Joint Tennis Teaching Project. This program was the initial prototype of the international player development program that the International Tennis Federation (ITF) would create years later. His work there caught the attention of many, including Princeton University, and in the fall of 1974 at age 29, Benjamin started his 26-year coaching tenure at Princeton University, becoming the youngest member of Princeton's Athletic Department. Over the years, he guided seven teams to Ivy League titles, and finished with an overall coaching record of 339-150 (and an Ivy League record of 178-44). Most notably, Benjamin's 1979 and 1980 teams were ranked in the Top 10 of the final national collegiate rankings – the only Ivy League teams ever to attain a final ITA Top 10 ranking.



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"I really didn't think I'd be coaching for more than a couple of years at Princeton and had no plans about tennis in the rest of my life, other than playing for fun," said Benjamin. "But I soon came to realize how much I enjoyed coaching college tennis and how much I appreciated the special and rewarding educational role of the coach with the players, on and off the court. "

While coaching at Princeton, Benjamin was asked to help on projects at the newly incorporated Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA). His management and leadership skill quickly became apparent and he was elected president of the ITA in 1979. After being re-elected president in 1981, Benjamin was also appointed as ITA Executive Director and he began to transform the world of varsity college tennis into an incredibly rich experience and an extensive enterprise that today includes national and regional tennis competitions, singles, doubles and team rankings, a comprehensive awards program, an annual Coaches Convention, and a robust sponsorship platform. During his four decades of service, the ITA has expanded from an association of less than 80 NCAA Men's Division I coaches to a non-profit organization that includes more than 1,500 men's and women's varsity coaches and close to 20,000 varsity student-athletes from over 1,200 NCAA Division I, II and III, NAIA, and junior/community colleges.

"There is nothing comparable in other countries to US college tennis," said Benjamin. "Obviously, I'm very biased but I truly believe that collegiate tennis is the anchor of our sport, and I hope that all junior players see it as an essential component of their tennis and educational experience."

As ITA Executive Director, Benjamin also worked closely with the USTA to help establish one of its flagship programs, Tennis On Campus. "It didn't make sense at the time that roughly 300,000 kids were playing high school tennis, but only 20,000 could play for their colleges," said Benjamin. "That left hundreds of thousands of kids having no competitive tennis opportunities when they got to college."

In 1979, Benjamin wrote *Competitive Tennis: A Guide for Parents and Young Players*, published by J.B. Lippincott, and in 1989 he edited *The ITCA Guide to Coaching Winning Tennis*, published by PrenticeHall. Benjamin has been the recipient of a number of prestigious awards for his accomplishments as coach and executive. In 2000, Benjamin was inducted into the Mercer County Tennis Council's Hall of Fame as well as the ITA Men's Collegiate Tennis Hall of Fame. In 2001 he received the prestigious Educational Merit Award from the USTA. In 2006 he was inducted into the USTA Middle States Tennis Hall of Fame alongside Billie Jean King, and in 2011, Benjamin was honored with the USTA's President's Award.

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The USTA Eastern Section, based in White Plains, N.Y., is a not-for-profit community service organization whose mission is to promote and develop the growth of tennis. The section encompasses all of New York State, Northern New Jersey and Greenwich, Conn. It is one of 17 geographic sections of the United States Tennis Association, the governing body of tennis in the United States, and supports more than 49,000 members. The section also establishes and maintains rules of fair play, high standards of sportsmanship and represents, in its jurisdiction, the programs and policies of the USTA. More information about the USTA Eastern Section is available by visiting: www.usta.com/Eastern

For more information, contact:

Mara Mazza, Manager, Public Relations
914-696-7290 or 914-715-4076; mazza@eastern.usta.com