

DAVID SANDERLIN, Ph.D (1943 - 2020)

From the time he was 6 years old and found a backboard to hit against near his home in El Cajon, to playing Grandfather-Grandson doubles tournaments with his two grandsons, David has had a love affair with tennis. David's father gave him his initial stroke instruction, "from a book." After that, David took the bit in his teeth and developed his strong all court game on his own. David's determination made him a force to be reckoned with in Southern California, then nationally. David hit the national scene at age 15. William Talbert wrote in Sports Illustrated, that David was among the four most promising boys between the ages of 12 & 16. David won both the 15's and the 18's divisions in the Beverly Hills Tennis Club tournament (against competition featuring Bill Bond and Dennis Ralston.) David's intense drive lifted him to the #2 ranking in the nation in the 15's and later, #11 in the 16's. Eventually, Les Stoen, of the La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club, put the finishing touches on David's potent, self-taught game.

After winning the CIF singles crown and graduating from Granite Hills, Coach Morgan of UCLA offered David a scholarship to play alongside teammates Arthur Ashe, Charlie Pasarell, & David Reed. Together, they won the NCAA national title in 1965. Before and after graduating from UCLA, David played in major tournaments all across the country. In 1964, He reached the round of 16 at the US Open, tying a decades old record by winning three consecutive, five-set matches, and upsetting the #8 seed, Hamilton Richardson. David's match results elevated him to a national men's ranking of No. 20. David's victories came at the expense of some of the world's finest players: Rafael Osuna (a US Open winner & world #1), Hamilton Richardson (#1 US Mens), Stan Smith, Abe Segal (South African Davis Cupper), Tom Edlefsen, Bill Bond, Cliff Buchholz, David Reed, Richard Leach, Sergio Tachini (Italian Champion).

David enrolled at Notre Dame intent on earning his Ph.D., but also volunteered to instruct the Irish's tennis team. Forced to lessen his tennis schedule to focus on his family and studies, David still found time to win the Indiana Open and the La Jolla Men's Open. Upon earning his doctorate in Medieval Studies, Dr. Sanderlin taught history for five years at California State University, Northridge. In a happy homecoming, Dr. Sanderlin accepted a teaching position and department chair at Miramar College. Dr. Sanderlin took the opportunity to expand his teaching subject matter into his other field of expertise: tennis. He initiated tennis classes at Miramar and developed advanced tennis concept courses such as strategy, court coverage, and doubles positioning. David continued to teach tennis at Miramar for 25 years.

Tennis has been in David's family for decades. His parents were both highly educated authors as well as tennis players. David's younger brother, Johnny, followed in his brother's footsteps. He was a top 11 year old in Southern California. Then, at the age of 11, Johnny was diagnosed with leukemia and given a year to live. Johnny beat those odds. With the love and support of his family and friends, he lived to nearly 16. In those years, Johnny, like his big brother, made an impact on the national tennis scene. Johnny and his partner, Roy Barth, won the 13 & under National Doubles Championship. Johnny and mother, Owenita, are memorialized by a novice junior tournament named for them at the Barnes Tennis Center. David's legacy of family first values has been manifest throughout the years. He has made it his mission to involve and enrich his entire family in the "sport of a lifetime." David has participated in, and frequently won titles: As the son in the Father-Son doubles, with father, George. The Mother-Son doubles with mother, Owenita. The Father-Daughter doubles with daughter, Michelle. As the father in the Father-Son doubles with sons, John and Kevin. And, as the Grandfather in the Grandfather-Grandson doubles with both Carson & Dylan. David and wife, Arnell, a non-competitive player, still enjoy their time playing tennis together.