This is the 16th year that Tennis Industry has named our Champions of Tennis, honoring the oft-unsung heroes who go above and beyond in helping to make a difference in tennis and in the business of tennis. We hope they inspire you, too, to continue to move this industry forward.
Don Tisdale

Anyone who’s ever undertaken a construction or renovation project knows there are a lot moving parts. This is especially true of the major projects the USTA has pursued in recent years.

Creating the USTA National Campus in Orlando, Fla., and the continued renovations and reconstruction at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York took a lot of planning on all fronts, not least how to make it all work financially. This is where Donald Tisdale shines.

“Don’s knowledge and expertise in the financial area is invaluable,” says USTA President & CEO Katrina Adams. “He’s that ‘EF Hutton’ person on our board: When he speaks, everyone listens. You know he’s evaluated and surveyed everything before coming out with an opinion.”

An avid tennis player, Tisdale, who recently moved with his wife, Gerri, from Lake Oswego, Ore., to the Seattle, Wash., area, has been on the USTA Board of Directors since 2005, serving as secretary-treasurer from 2007 to 2012, and then as a vice president. While he’s retiring as a board member at the end of 2016, Adams says Tisdale will become a presidential appointee. “It still allows me to pick up the phone and lean on him,” she says.

Behind the scenes, Tisdale’s rare combination of business knowledge, passion for tennis and drive to grow this sport has helped push the envelope for the USTA and this industry. In many ways, it could be argued that without his financial leadership, the USTA might not have had the courage to tackle the National Tennis Center and National Campus projects, both critical to the growth of the sport and industry. And it’s why Tisdale is Tennis Industry’s 2016 Person of the Year.

“He’s an unbelievable guy,” says Kurt Kamperman, USTA chief executive of Community Tennis and the National Campus. “He loves this game. He’s a wiz financially, and he’s truly selfless.

“His impact and influence on key initiatives and projects the USTA undertook in the last 10 years cannot be overstated.”

“In a lot of ways, Don is probably the strongest, most qualified person never to have been president of the USTA,” adds Dave Haggerty, a former USTA president who is now president of the International Tennis Federation. “He’s had a big impact on the financing on many projects. He’s saved the USTA a lot of money.”

For his part, Tisdale remains all-in when it comes to promoting tennis.

“Tennis has been the foundation for me throughout my life and opened doors that wouldn’t have opened otherwise, including the fabulous experience I’ve had with the USTA,” he says. “But I’m just one of a group of people that has brought the USTA to where it is. I’m very proud to be associated with so many good people over so many years.”

—Peter Francesconi
TENNIS INDUSTRY SERVICE AWARD

Randy Futty

When it comes to tennis courts, it’s hard to find someone with more knowledge than Randy Futty. The vice president of business development for California Sports Surfaces—the maker of DecoTurf—Futty has also held key roles with Har-Tru and Connor Sport Court.

But whether tackling the challenges of the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center or revitalizing school courts in a small town, Futty brings a passion to this sport few can match. That’s a key reason he’s our 2016 Tennis Industry Service Award winner.

Futty’s dedication also comes through in his volunteer work. He’s spent more than a decade on the board of the American Sports Builders Association. He’s served on and chaired the USTA Technical Committee and now he serves on the USTA Public Parks Committee. He’s also volunteered with Special Olympics in Virginia, where he lives. “I learned early on that you need to give back,” Futty says. “Volunteering—and advocacy for this game and this industry—is important at all levels.” —Peter Francesconi

PRIVATE FACILITY OF THE YEAR

Sea Colony Tennis Club

Like many resort communities, the Sea Colony Tennis Club in Bethany Beach, Del., has first-rate playing options and programs. Its 34 hard, clay and indoor courts run clinics, lessons, and tournaments for all playing levels, and the club has a half-mile private beach, multiple pools and a recently renovated fitness center.

What earns Sea Colony accolades as our Private Facility of the Year is its atmosphere. As Director of Tennis Thomas Johnston explains, “You always hear people say, ‘Everybody is welcomed here.’ Well, that’s the whole idea!” Johnston’s goals are that participants have fun and learn something new in a welcoming environment.

As Maiysha Warren, USTA National Manager, Tennis Facilities and Development, explains, “I talk with many people about facilities around the country. Rarely is the praise as unanimous as it is concerning Sea Colony.” —Kent Oswald

GRASSROOTS CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

Scott Hanover

For nearly 20 years, Scott Hanover has made a difference through tennis. Whether it’s a clinic for children or stepping up to organize a new league for young professionals, his passion and desire for growing this sport knows no bounds. That’s why he is Tennis Industry’s Grassroots Tennis Champion of the Year.

Hanover, the tennis director at the Plaza Tennis Center in Kansas City, Mo., first learned the game through an NJTL and then playing for his high school, seeing first-hand the benefits the sport brings to the grassroots. Today, he organizes USTA Flex Leagues, World TeamTennis Rec Leagues, among others. Hanover also has served within the USTA at the national, sectional and district levels, including three years as president of USTA Missouri Valley.

“I developed a great fondness for community tennis,” Hanover says. “It’s important to provide that opportunity.” —Andrew Robinson

Tip for Success
Make volunteering in this industry a core value.

Tip for Success
Create the right atmosphere by hiring staff who believe in making sure players will have fun and learn.

Tip for Success
Go slow and steady. It’s good to take risks, but you want to take sure steps, too.
Cindy Huether

“Just getting the community involved” is Cindy Huether’s mantra when it comes to tennis in Sioux Falls, S.D. As executive director of the Sioux Falls Tennis Association, Huether has done that and more to build tennis from the ground up.

In developing the city’s tennis infrastructure, Huether’s accomplishments are vast. She provides equipment to elementary school and day-care facilities, was instrumental in building one of the nation’s first-ever permanent, 36-foot-court tennis complexes, Spellerberg Park, and organized Recreation Coaches Workshops for all teachers in the city—to name a few.

Huether and her husband, Mike (below), who is the current mayor of Sioux Falls, have also opened their personal checkbook to grow tennis, providing the lead gifts on both the Huether Tennis Center at Augustana College in 2009 and the new Huether Family Match Pointe Indoor Tennis Center, which opened in 2015. —Lisa Mushett
WHEELCHAIR TENNIS CHAMPION OF THE YEAR
Dan James

A childhood friend’s illness and a desire to do more helped shape the path of Dan James’ wheelchair coaching career. Rolf Jacobson, both a friend and mentor to James, was a top junior player. Diagnosed with cancer at age 15, Jacobson lost both his legs but continued playing in a wheelchair, partnering with James in doubles.

Later, as a young club pro, James was covering a clinic and was stunned to arrive on court to see 10 wheelchair players waiting. “I taught the best able-bodied tennis clinic for 30 minutes,” he says, laughing. “Then, the players took me under their wing. I got in the chair, fell out of it 10 times but fell in love with the sport.”

After 18 years with the USTA, most recently as national manager of Wheelchair Tennis, James left his post past fall, but his impact remains. “My hope was to help people understand that these players are legitimate athletes,” he says. “Get past the inspiration, stop seeing the chair and start seeing the tennis player.” —Peg Connor
CTA OF THE YEAR
San Antonio Tennis Association

Every year, the San Antonio Tennis Association (SATA) reaches more than 10,000 people with its array of tennis programming and events for all ages and abilities. SATA also works closely with the city’s Parks & Rec Department, as well as schools, clubs and other tennis organizations in the surrounding area—all to help spread the game to more people.

In both 2015 and 2016, SATA was named USTA Texas Community Tennis Association of the Year. This year, the organization adds Tennis Industry’s CTA of the Year honors.

Led by President Debbie Grieder and Executive Director Roger Ojeda, SATA invested time and resources into revitalizing the hub of tennis for the community, the McFarlin Tennis Facility. Those efforts have paid off by improving relationships with the city, school districts and military, among other local groups.

“SATA has had great success in revitalizing San Antonio’s tennis scene and growing this sport overall,” says USTA Texas Executive Director Van Barry. — Todd Carlson

TENNIS SALES REP OF THE YEAR
Tim Miles

Sales is not always about selling. At its highest levels it is just as much about sharing. Or at least it is as practiced by Tim Miles, our Sales Rep of the Year.

Babolat’s North Florida rep doesn’t serve his territory by blindly pitching products, or selling in a way that only benefits his own interests. Rather, he does so by “trying to figure out strengths and weaknesses and inform as much as learn,” according to Miles. “It’s important to understand what the [store owner’s] goal is, what their long-term vision is, and how we can make that shop as profitable as possible.”

“Tim is always trying to find ways to help his accounts grow their customer base and their business,” says Regional Sales Manager David Dwelle, and it’s an advocacy that extends beyond the Babolat brand and its customers. “I’ve worked with Tim for eight years and he is constantly sending in ideas to help grow the game of tennis.” — Kent Oswald

JUNIOR TENNIS CHAMPION OF THE YEAR
Colette Lewis

In Kalamazoo, Mich., where journalist Colette Lewis grew up, the premier sports event remains the Boys’ 18 and 16 USTA National Championships. Lewis says she loved going to the junior tennis tournament because it was a “huge part of the summer scene.”

“I was always impressed by the dedication and maturity of most junior tennis players,” says Lewis, “and thought they weren’t recognized enough for the sacrifices they made to be the best they could be.”

Since 2005, Lewis has covered junior players from around the U.S. for her blog, ZooTennis, and other outlets. Her support has made her our Junior Tennis Champion for 2016.

“There is no greater advocate for junior tennis in the U.S. than Colette,” says Bill Mountford, the USTA’s director of junior tournaments. “Junior players consider it a tremendous honor when Colette reports on their results.”

— Tracy Maymon

Tip for Success
Do surveys to make sure you’re focusing on the needs and wants of your customers.

Tip for Success
You can learn from your customers’ business experience, even if it’s from outside of tennis.

Tip for Success
Use social media to share your expertise with an online community you feel comfortable in.
STRINGER OF THE YEAR

Philip van Asselt

Philip van Asselt, owner of Tennis Junction in Bryn Mawr, Pa., has built his store’s reputation around providing great racquet service. A USRSA Master Racquet Technician for more than 24 years, van Asselt makes sure his clients understand the importance of having the right racquet—and string, and tension—to fit their style of play. And he ensures all his employees, including a staff of Certified Stringers and MRTs, continue providing the best service possible. For his dedication to servicing and educating his customers, van Asselt is TI’s 2016 Stringer of the Year.

To make sure his customers hone in on the right racquet, van Asselt has more than 200 demos available. But a key to his service is the use of a Babolat Racquet Diagnostic Center. String-bed deflection readings can be tracked, and players are advised when their string set-up has lost its ability to perform.

“Customers need to be educated,” van Asselt says. “It will help create loyalty.” —Bob Patterson

Tip for Success
Build your reputation on consistency, and never stop learning.

Tip for Success
PE teachers know how to manage groups of kids, so hire them to work your 10-and-Under program.

Tip for Success
Don’t forget your roots—always remember why you started the program in the first place.

YOUTH TENNIS PROVIDER OF THE YEAR

Sammy Giammalva

Sammy Giammalva’s visionary style to expand the game of tennis started with the purchase of a fading tennis club in northwest Houston 16 years ago. The former No. 28-ranked ATP player took his mission directly to this community of vibrant, young families, who would make the Giammalva Racquet Club their home.

Giammalva was successful in growing the game locally in part because of his implementation of school-related programs, such as on-site support for PE teachers and after-school tennis. They not only brought tennis to new youth players, but also benefitted by adding dozens of new family memberships to the club during its first year.

“Sammy is an example of one who truly understands the value of local programs for their community,” says USTA Texas Executive Director Van Barry.

—Todd Carlson

Tip for Success
At a time when many parks and recreation departments are cutting budgets and programs, COR Tennis & the Reading (Pa.) Recreation Commission has helped tennis thrive through the power of community partnerships.

Starting small in 1998, COR provided staff to conduct USTA school tennis assemblies. From there, COR expanded outreach to local schools, businesses and clubs, with support from tennis retailer Fromuth.

COR Tennis Director Larry Zerbe has been instrumental. “Larry sets high expectations for staff and players,” says Renee Lenz, tennis service rep for USTA Middle States. “He develops great tennis players, but, more importantly, he develops great kids.”

Today, the courts in Reading are filled with families, a testament to the positive impact COR Tennis continues to have.

—Peg Connor

PARK & REC AGENCY OF THE YEAR

COR Tennis/Reading Rec Commission

www.tennisindustrymag.com
MASS MERCHANT/CHAIN OF THE YEAR
PGA Tour Superstore

PGA Tour Superstore earns customer and manufacturer plaudits with the retail equivalent of an all-court game. Its 27 (and growing) big-box locations each devote about 5,000 square feet to tennis inventory, have in-store hitting alleys and, in some cases, actual courts. Many stores also have Master Racquet Technicians on staff.

The company also works well with its vendors. “PGA is a good partner in helping educate consumers and advocating for our sport,” according to Mickey Maule, Wilson’s regional commercial director of racquet sports. “They go above and beyond in their merchandising support and in showcasing tennis.”

For those questioning why a store with golf in its name is so interested in tennis, Chief Marketing Officer Matt Corey answers: “Golf and tennis go hand-in-hand, with many households having family members playing both. We focus on taking care of our customers one at a time, and our goal is to inspire them to play their best.”

—Kent Oswald

INNOVATIVE TENNIS EVENT OF THE YEAR
New Balance High School Championships

The New Balance High School Championships was created in 2014 to honor top high school tennis players from across the United States. The tournament’s growing popularity, both with players and their families, makes it our Innovative Tennis Event of the Year.

The event, which is run by the USTA and funded by Boston-based New Balance, is held over four days in July at Harvard University. It features 64-player singles draws, uses the Universal Tennis Rating system to determine entries and seedings, and the girls’ and boys’ winners receive wild cards into the main draw of the ITF International Hard Court Championships.

“This tournament represents an incredible opportunity for the country’s top young players to compete on a national stage,” says Bruce Schilling, general manager of tennis for New Balance.

—James Maimonis

HIGH SCHOOL COACH OF THE YEAR
Mark Faber

USPTA Elite Professional Mark Faber is not only head tennis coach at Toledo St. Francis High School in Ohio, he’s also director of tennis at Twos Athletic Club and serves as vice president of the Ohio Tennis Coaches Association.

Faber has been a no-cut coach for 22 years, and he helped create a program at his club that allows high school teams to practice during the off-season, without memberships. “Over the past three years, we’ve also created several fun, out-of-the-norm events geared toward the needs of high school students,” says Faber.

Faber also serves on the USTA’s national High School Task Force. “Mark’s undying commitment and his leadership on the Task Force has helped develop a clear vision for enhancing high school tennis,” says Glenn Arrington, director of high school tennis for the USTA.

—Tracy Maymon

Tip for Success
Create the best consumer experience for players—and their parents. Make the participants feel welcomed and valued.

Tip for Success
To grow a strong program, you need to pay attention to all players, not just the top players.

Tip for Success
Hire people passionate about the sport, and work with vendors to continue to educate both staff and consumers.
NJTL OF THE YEAR

Marty Hennessy Inspiring Children Foundation

Twelve years ago, Ryan Wolfington and Marty Hennessy helped one boy find a facility to play tennis in Las Vegas, and maybe earn a college scholarship. They didn’t plan on building one of the most successful NJTL programs in the entire country.

“It’s been an amazing journey,” says Hennessy. “We wanted kids to see they had choices. Now they go through our program, come back and mentor other kids.”

The Marty Hennessey Foundation, our NJTL of the Year, mentors more than 350 kids annually, and over 70 NJTL graduates have earned college scholarships.

“I always read quotes like ‘Be the change you wish to see in the world,’ but I never really understood what that meant until I went through the program,” says Trent Alenik, who was the second child in the Foundation and now is the current executive director. “To help people get to places they never thought were imaginable, it’s truly remarkable.” — Wendy Anderson

ADULT TENNIS PROVIDER OF THE YEAR

Jack’s Abby Social Tennis League

Since the spring of 2015, Jack’s Abby Social Tennis League has been helping more than 350 adults ages 21 to 40 have fun, stay active and meet new friends. The league, sponsored by Jack’s Abby Craft Lagers, originated in Brookline, Mass., and has now spread to multiple sites around Boston as well as to New Haven, Conn. For its efforts, it is TI’s Adult Tennis Provider of the Year.

“Over the last two years, we’ve seen a huge growth in attracting young adults to tennis nationwide via social leagues,” says Marilyn Sherman, USTA national promotions manager for Adult Tennis. “Jack’s Abby is a great example of a weekly league that is as much fun off the court as it is on.”

“It’s exciting to be able to reach a wide audience looking to play tennis and meet new people,” adds USTA New England Adult Recreation Coordinator Christo Schultz. “This is the perfect platform.” — James Maimonis

USTA SECTION OF THE YEAR

Missouri Valley

When it comes to growing tennis, the USTA Missouri Valley section gets it. “They do so many things well,” says Craig Jones, the USTA’s Director of Professional Development & Education.

The section—composed of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri and part of Illinois—has been a leader in promoting Youth Progression. Hispanic outreach also has also been at the forefront, as has reaching out to the wheelchair and adaptive communities. The seven Tennis Service Reps spend a lot of time with park and rec departments, as well as high school coaches in rural communities. The section is seeing growth in many areas, including youth tennis, Junior Team Tennis and adult leagues.

“We have a strong staff and a great relationship with our board,” says Executive Director Mary Buschmann, “plus so many great volunteers, with such great passion for this sport.”

— Cynthia Sherman

Tip for Success
Use social media. People are visual—share photos and videos you can go back to and track progress.

Tip for Success
Offer an inclusive environment for players off the court, so they’ll want to arrive early and stay after.

Tip for Success
Strive to communicate as best as you can out in the community.

www.tennisindustrymag.com
Kirk Anderson

When asked to suggest possible candidates for Tennis Industry’s PTR Member of the Year and USPTA Member of the Year, the heads of both organizations didn’t hesitate: They both picked longtime pro Kirk Anderson—the first time we’ve had a unified choice.

Anderson, who was named our Person of the Year in 2006, retired in September after 20 years with USTA national. One of only 11 people worldwide to hold Master Professional distinction with both the PTR and USPTA, Anderson recently won the USPTA’s 2016 Alex Gor-don Award for Professional of the Year. His numerous honors include PTR Professional of the Year, in 2012, and the Educational Merit Award from the International Tennis Hall of Fame, in 2003.

“One of the things I take pride in is changing the way we’ve introduced tennis to so many people,” says Anderson, who is a popular speaker for both teaching pro organiza-tions. “More than 100,000 people have gone through our workshops, and I’m proud of how we delivered them, the quality of the faculty, and being able to give people the best experience possible.”

While Anderson may be “retired,” he admits his career is by no means over. “I hope to be doing a lot of things with coaching and coaching education,” he says.

—Peter Francesconi