



Remembrance's - Willie H. Graves

Sunrise February 14, 1946 ▪ Sunset November 7, 2022

*Presented by Kelly Jackson, Vice President, Washington Tennis Association
on Behalf of Cheryl Sloan, President, Mid-Eastern Tennis Association*

Willie Graves served as the Treasurer for META (Mid-Eastern Tennis Association) for many years. The Treasurer before Willie, the late Ruth Dupree, also served for a long time.

When Willie and I discussed high finances for META, our favorite meeting place was mid-way between our homes at McDonalds located at the corner of East West Highway and Route 1. We had a bunch of those meetings!

Willie's illness did not stop him it only slowed him down. I remember being excited to join Carol's birthday celebration for him while he was at a rehabilitation center. He loved to give of himself and to give back. So much so, we lost him while he attended a Neighborhood Association meeting.

We thank you Willie for your service, we honor you and we miss you. We sincerely do!

Best summarized by Emily Dickinson's

"Because I Could Not Stop for Death"

*Because I could not stop for Death –
He kindly stopped for me –
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –
And Immortality.*

*We slowly drove – He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility –*

*and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity ...*



Respectfully Submitted,
Cheryl Sloan, META President
Friday, November 9, 2022

Mid-Eastern Tennis Association - A Section of the American Tennis Association

META Member Clubs

- Active Aces Super Senior Tennis Club (AASSTC)
- Baltimore Tennis Club
- Deanwood Tennis Association
- Fort Lincoln Tennis Club
- Netmen Co-Ed Tennis Club
- S.A.F.E. DC
- The Mall Tennis Club
- Virginia State University Men's Tennis
- Washington Tennis Association
- Washington Tennis & Education Foundation



Message From META President

Welcome and a Prosperous and Healthy 2023 from the META Family!

This issue of the META Quarterly Newsletter is dedicated to **THE YOUTH** who are supported by and members of our META clubs. We are very proud of them and their accomplishments and hope you enjoy reading about the successes, travels and stories of those featured.

We also offer these encouraging words to them from the late, great Arthur Ashe:

START WHERE YOU ARE, USE WHAT YOU HAVE, DO WHAT YOU CAN!

Cheryl Sloan

META President

Jacob Poole Returns from Rafa Nadal Academy

Thank you Mayor Bowser for providing me the opportunity to help a 16 year old see the other side of the world and learn and play tennis. That is what S.A.F.E. represents - education, recreation and cultural enrichment with an emphasis on reducing crime and destructive behavior in the community. We know what works and why!

We truly had a great time! As you can imagine, it was Jacob's first time out of the country and he played some unbelievable tennis in Spain. We spent two days in Barcelona, where he trained and played practice matches.

Then we were off to Mallorca - aka "Rafa Nadal's Island." Rafa is now my all time favorite tennis player mainly because of what he does for young people. His Academy is based on developing young kids ages 4+ to become good people even if they do not become tennis pros.

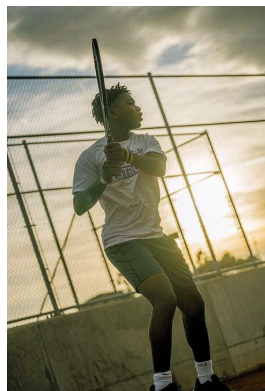
Jacob played 3 matches, lost 1 then played the No. 2 16 year old of the Academy. He lost the 1st set, then he got some encouraging words such as "*all flights are cancelled*" which means take your time, slow down, relax. "*Rash-Rash*" means get all over him like a rash, "*1-point at a time*" means move your feet/watch the ball. Then the light bulb came on, everything we have ever talked about such as 1st serve/returns, attacking your opponents 2nd serve and consistency came into play. He won the 2nd set and won 11-9 tie breaker.

I can honestly say, I think he has finally figured out making adjustments. It was so refreshing for me to witness. He definitely made us proud!

As a Certified PTR Pro and the PTR State Representative for WDC, with your blessing, the plan is to let everyone know we have a tennis "*Champion*" in the making and he is following in the footsteps of Frances Tiafoe, who has already given Jacob some good advice.

Rafa Nadal Academy did not have WDC on their radar, they considered WDC as being a part of Maryland. That has changed. Thanks for everything!

Forever Grateful,
Coach Spyke Henry





Natalia Thomas Youth Board of Directors, S.A.F.E.

I have been part of S.A.F.E. (Smart Activities for Fitness & Education) since 2008 when I was 7 years old. Coach Spyke Henry was partnering with my elementary school, Whittier, to provide after-school tennis sessions to students. I knew I loved tennis the first time I picked up a racket during my first session and I have been playing ever since.

Before playing tennis, I was not an active kid at all. I did some karate but nothing stuck like playing tennis. After some time, I came to realize that it was due to my involvement with S.A.F.E. Being involved with a program with supportive leaders like Coach Henry was crucial to my commitment.

It is important to point out that S.A.F.E. is not just about sports. It is about teamwork, community and education. I have developed relationships with many of the kids and teens who represent this program. We have not only bonded over tennis but through going to basketball games, cookouts, concerts, etc. I have also learned about diversity of our interests. Some of us play instruments like the violin and piano. Some of us play other sports like basketball, baseball and even golf. This community that we have built has been recognized in Washington, DC as S.A.F.E. was Voted No. 1 2021 Community Champion during the **Think Local First Awards Ceremony**.

Currently, I am 20 years old and I am a junior at Emory University studying Political Science and Economics. After graduating, I plan to go to law school, become a lawyer and ultimately a judge. I have always been passionate about politics and government partly due to growing up in the nation's Capital, but also being a part of S.A.F.E. has made me realize that being an active member of a community is so important and valuable. Nowadays, it is so easy for us to get wrapped up in our own lives to the point where we do not recognize that we need to love our neighbor and be of service to others.

I want to be of service and use my skills to help my community flourish and pass on a better world to the future generation. Being a part of S.A.F.E. has made me more aware of and grateful to have a support system where not only do others lift me up, but I also uplift others as well. I hope to use this lesson and the many other lessons I have developed from S.A.F.E. during my college years and beyond in my career.

**Current META Secretary
S.A.F.E. Youth Board of
Directors President**

ATA Member, Corinne Chau



Corinne Chau is a high school student who has been an ATA member for as long as she can remember. In 2017, she competed in the Girls 12s Singles Final of the 100th ATA National Tournament!

This is where she learned about Dr. Robert "Whirlwind" Johnson and how he became the benefactor of tennis legends Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe.

In honor of Dr. Johnson, Gibson and Ashe (all three of whom were inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame), Corinne created a literacy project called the **Whirlwind Reading Challenge**. In two years time, Corinne collaborated with Dr. J's grandson, Mr. Lange Johnson, and raised over

\$4,300 for the Whirlwind Johnson Foundation.

"I was stunned to learn Mr. Lange Johnson passed away. When it came to my reading challenge, he really believed in me and encouraged everything I tried to do for his family and their foundation." This encouragement led to one of the highlights of Corinne's Whirlwind Reading Challenge: her receiving the **USTA Mid-Atlantic Serve It Forward! Youth Leader Award**.



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ATA Member, Corinne Chau

An August 2020 story about her project was in *The Baltimore Sun*. It was also on Twitter where retired pro James Blake gave her a thumbs up! Later, in February 2022, Corinne was the subject of a Black History Month feature on USTA's National website.

Here's the link—

<https://www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/midatlantic/inspiring-changemakers-in-the-section.html>

Because Corinne's project honors the legacy of the ATA and Black tennis, it means a lot to her. If you want to help Corinne reach \$5,000 in donations to the Whirlwind Johnson Foundation, please visit:

<https://www.Whirlwindreadingchallenge.weebly.com/donate.html>

Thank you for supporting one of ATA and META's most outstanding juniors!



HAT'S OFF

Baltimore Tennis Club (BTC)

Congrats BTC on your new edition of the Baltimore Tennis Club Newsletter!

Jacqueline Rose, Editor of the newsletter can be reached at Jacquelineerose@gmail.com for information on how to submit articles and/or other materials for review and approval for inclusion in the newsletter.

Celebrate Black History Month at Washington Tennis & Education Foundation

February is Black History Month and to celebrate, WTEF students will spend this month learning, sharing and participating in Black history! As you know, WTEF has a calling and commitment to empower the next generation of innovators, athletes, creators and leaders. To that end, over the next month we will share our students' accomplishments on and off tennis court, as we are so proud of the work they do every day to make Black history.

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Tennis @ Banneker

Coach Richard King

Tennis at Banneker (T@B), uses volunteers mostly associated with Piney Run Foundation through enhanced offerings sponsored by DC Department of Parks and Recreation. T@B recently completed a spring, summer and fall instructional program teaching and drilling well over 500 tennis lovers in 2021. We were also successful with our 2020 program focused on safety during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. T@B has recruited 15 dedicated volunteers including three PTR certified instructors and four additional PTR instructors in-training.

In 2020 through 2021 Piney Run with DPR established regular weekly Wednesday junior competitions for competitive young players at the South East Tennis and Learning Center. It has become a go-to incubator for the next Frances Tiafoe's in our area. In the future we want to add a life skills mentoring feature to the junior competition program. T@B and Piney Run are also guiding two women's competitive teams which experienced considerable success in 2021.

It's a bit corny and overused, but most of us are just dedicated to *Growing the Game*.



WTEF students Morgan Tucker and Kolby Whitener with their champion and finalist medals from the recent USTA Girls 18 and 14 tournaments.

Members Club Spotlight!

Washington Tennis & Education Foundation

Highlights of 2022

BUILDING LIFE CHAMPIONS - WTEF supports youth across Washington DC through tennis, academic support and enrichment programs. The Arthur Ashe Children's Program (AACP) serves over 100 students by creating a safe environment for them at school to develop life skills and tennis. At our flagship center in Ward 7, WTEF student-athletes participate in monthly STEM Engagement activities, community service and USTA events. With your support we can continue to empower life champions!

WTEF STUDENT ATHLETES and COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - WTEF programming includes a wide-range of educational, community engaging activities in which our student athletes participate. Here are just a few of the fun activities our students recently enjoyed in April...

Arthur Ashe Children's Program | Life Skill Skills

The AACP engages DC public schools to provide tennis, education and life skills to our student athletes.

Earth Day Clean Up with DC Parks

Our student athletes participated in a DC park clean-up effort and learned about Earth Day.

STEM Engagement Series | Future Scientists

The STEM engagement series collaborates with diverse partners to engage our student athletes in amazing activities.

Howard University Tennis Team Meet and Greet

Our student athletes celebrated Howard University Tennis as a part of our community by enjoying a meet and greet with the team before watching their match.



CFE Students participate in STEM Engagement Series Baby Scientists!



WTEF Students participate in Earth Day Clean-Up at our East Campus!

BIG THANKS TO FRANCES TIAFOE LIFE CHAMPION!

We are excited to announce Mr. Frances Tiafoe graciously granted WTEF exclusive access for tennis time and one-on-one interviews at the U.S. Men's Clay Court Championships in Houston Texas! Mr. Tiafoe will be welcoming all of our WTEF 2022 Annual Share the Love Gala guests and opening our awards ceremony by video. We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to both Frances and his brother Franklin for their generosity, time and support of the WTEF mission.

We appreciate you both so much!



WTEF Students with Howard University Women's & Men's Tennis Team!

Active Aces Super Senior Tennis Club (AASSTC) Junior Aces



The Active Aces Super Senior Tennis Club (AASSTC) Junior Aces is a group of under-resourced Washington, DC area youth coached by AASSTC seniors.

The program emphasizes providing youth with quality tennis instruction along with character building activities that are central to the sport of tennis. The club has a 20-year dedicated history of teaching children to play tennis. The program has created opportunities for them to compete in USTA Junior Team Tennis, on high school teams, at the annual ATA tournament and beyond into their adulthood.

Currently, we have 26 youth enrolled in our Winter Session at the Watkins Park Tennis Bubble. Since returning to courts after the difficult pandemic 2020 shutdown period, we had as many as 36 kids return to our program. We were successful in keeping student interest in tennis and in our program through a grant awarded from the USTA Foundation in our capacity as a NJTL member group.

With the grant we were able to provide youth with laptops to set up a virtual learning program to teach tennis and educational lessons. We are building on this success and now are holding three seasonal sessions per year, two indoors at Watkins Park and a Summer Session that is coming up in June at Flowers High School in Prince George's County.

For further information contact Coach John Oubre, 202-270-5638. Website: [AASSTC.org/Junior Aces](http://AASSTC.org/Junior%20Aces)

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Celebrate Black History Month at Washington Tennis & Education Foundation

This Black History Month, join in the celebration and help support the success of WTEF students. As a special offer, **anyone who makes a gift of at least \$500 this month will receive a limited edition LOVE hoodie!** Or, if you prefer to give in small increments, anyone who establishes a monthly gift of at least \$40 this February **will also received a special edition hoodie.** For information on how to donate please visit the WTEF website at <https://support.wtef.org/give/441972/#!/donation/checkout>.

WTEF 2023 Annual Share The Love Gala, May 26, 2023, Waldorf Astoria, Washington, DC.

META Quarterly Newsletter Staff

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