

Take 5 with a North Carolina Tennis Hall of Famer- Billy Trott

Our monthly "Take 5 with a North Carolina Tennis Hall of Famer" interview series continues with William "Billy" Trott. Billy is a member of the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame Class of 2017. He will be inducted on Saturday, January 28th at Tennis Weekend in Pinehurst, NC.

Billy Trott was one of the state's best high school players in the early 1960's. Trott won three NC State Closed Doubles Championships with partner Ed Parker, finished runner-up in the NCHSAA 1964 Singles Championships, and was a member of the State Championship winning tennis team at Broughton High School in both 1963 and 1964.

Trott attended the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, helping the Tar Heels to three ACC championships or co-championships in 1966, 1967, and 1968. Trott also won the ACC Doubles Championships in 1967 and 1968. Following his playing career at UNC, Trott served as the head coach to UNC's freshman tennis team while he attend law school at the university from 1968-1971. During that time, Trott also served as a coaching assistant to UNC's varsity tennis team.



Since the late 1980's, Trott has been a crucial member of both USTA North Carolina and the North Carolina Tennis Foundation. Trott has served both these organizations in multiple roles, including: Member of the Board of Directors and Informal Legal Advisor and Counselor. Trott also served as USTA North Carolina Vice President from 2012-2014, USTA North Carolina First Vice President from 2014-2016, and Trott is currently serving as the USTA North Carolina President until 2018.

"Billy Trott was an exceptional tennis player in North Carolina, but his true value has come from his selflessness and volunteerism," said Kelly Gaines, NC Tennis Foundation Executive Director. "For almost 30 years, Billy has been a dedicated member of both the USTA North Carolina and NCTF families. He has dedicated countless hours to both organizations, and his passion and love for tennis are contagious."

Q: What does it mean for you to be in the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame?

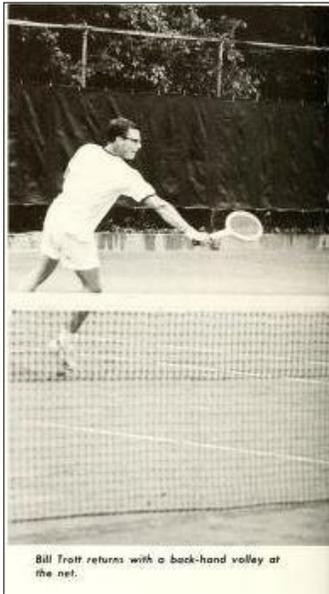
A: I am very proud to be put in the same category as so many wonderful people that I know, respect and have looked up to for many years. The Hall of Fame has many great coaches, players, administrators, and I feel very fortunate to be recognized with them. One of the main goals of the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame is to promote the sport of tennis by preserving its history and hopefully inspiring future players, coaches and administrators.

Q: Do you remember who called you and let you know you were being inducted into the Hall of Fame?

A: Vicki Everette called me while I was at my desk and surprised me. I have known Vicki and her husband Maurice for many years and have always admired and appreciated everything they have done for the sport.

Q: Who has had the greatest influence on your tennis career?

A: I can't narrow it down to one person but a few people come to mind. The first would have to be my parents, both of whom had played tennis in their youth. They were older when I was born and I never saw either play. They were supportive and encouraged me to play tennis and multiple sports. They did not push me to focus on one sport.



The first person I remember as a child actually helping me with my game was Semi Mintz. He was primarily known as a star basketball player at Davidson who held the NCAA free throw shooting record. He was a self-taught tennis player who played tennis for about half of the year. He really emphasized loving the game and sportsmanship above all.

Ed Parker would have to be another one. I was very fortunate to grow up with Ed in Raleigh and play numerous sports with him. We really pushed each other and as a result made each other better. This was especially true on the tennis court. Ed got the first tennis scholarship to Wake Forest.

In terms of tennis technique, it would have to be Coach Don Skakle when I went to the University of North Carolina. He taught me how to serve and volley and gave me confidence that I could make this the major part of my game. I remember standing at the net with him on the other side at the service line firing balls at me to work on my reaction time and confidence at the net. Serving and volleying eventually became the best part of my game and I have Coach Skakle to thank for that.

Q: What is your favorite on court memory?

A: I don't think I have a single favorite but my best memories are team victories. I was fortunate to play on two North Carolina State High School Championship Teams at Broughton High School and I remember all the comradery on that team. At Carolina, I was on three ACC Champion/Co-Champion teams and those were all great experiences. Carolina has a great history of tennis, and I was proud to be a part of it.

My most *intense* on court memory was during my junior year at Carolina. We were vying for what we considered east coast supremacy and we were playing the University of Miami. Miami was one of our main rivals. We played on the old clay courts in Chapel Hill by the cemetery. Interest was so high that they brought in extra grandstands to seat the nearly 5,000 people in attendance. It was the most electric tennis atmosphere that I have experienced. I won my singles match, and Gene Hamilton and I played a great doubles match at number one doubles against two great players, one of whom was Jaime Fillol who later Davis Cup and was highly rated on the pro tour. It went three sets and we lost, but we gave it our all. Carolina ended up losing that match 6-3, but I will never forget the intensity of the experience.

Q: If you could play any player from any era, who and where would you play?

A: There is no doubt on this one; it would be Roger Federer at Wimbledon. As a doubles player, perhaps I would prefer that it be in doubles. I never had the chance to play competitively on grass, but I am fairly certain that it would have been my best surface. I would love to have the opportunity to play at Wimbledon. I think Wimbledon will always be the most prestigious venue in all of tennis, and to play Roger Federer there would be a dream. I consider him the best player of all time and he's a great ambassador for tennis.



Q: Question from Stephen Enochs, fellow class of 2017 NC Tennis Hall of Fame Inductee

What are you most grateful for that the game of tennis has given to you?

A: I am most grateful for the many friendships I have made through tennis. You learn a lot about people from how they keep score, call the lines and conduct themselves under pressure. You learn more about yourself and others from defeat than from victory. I have found that tennis people are almost uniformly great and honorable people. I have personally had the good fortune to have a group of tennis friends who have played together since we were in our late 20's. I recommend that anyone who plays tennis at any level develop such a group of compatible friends and players.



Q: What would you like to ask fellow class of 2017 NC Tennis Hall of Fame inductee Stephen Enochs?

A: How has your involvement and success in tennis inspired you to give back to the game?

Thank you for reading this month's installment of "Take 5 with a North Carolina Tennis Hall of Famer". If you have a Hall of Famer you would like us to catch up with please let us know. To learn more about the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame and the North Carolina Tennis Foundation, please visit www.nctennisfoundation.com.