

COLORADO TENNIS



HALL OF FAME GALA

**& Colorado Tennis Association
Annual Awards Celebration**

February 20, 2004



It all began in 1945 when Irwin found his mother's old wooden handled 1918 tennis racket. He strung it with twine and he and friend Nick Siegel would pack their lunches and go to Gove Junior High to play tennis, all day, everyday, each summer.

At East High School Irwin competed at the No. 1 spot on the tennis team, and in 1949, they captured the state title. Irwin then played tennis at the University of Denver where he graduated with a degree in Mathematics.

After a stint in the US Air Force, Irwin returned to Denver in 1957 and was hired as the Director of Tennis at Green Gables Club, a position he still holds today, 47 years later.

In the late 1950s, only a few clubs offered tennis instruction in Denver. So in 1958, Irwin began working with Arnie Brown at Cherry Hills Country Club to develop an outreach program. By training their top juniors to teach tennis, and then placing them at area facilities with courts, they were able to provide tennis instruction to many more players. In all, at least 15 metro area clubs benefited from the program. Irwin then organized a summer junior league to provide competition for all these new tennis players. The interclub league was later turned over to the CTA. Today, the league attracts more than 3,000 juniors each year. In addition to creating a junior league, Irwin started a doubles and mixed doubles tournament at Green Gables which ultimately hosted more than 500 players.

Irwin Hoffman



Over the decades, Irwin has shared his love and passion for the game with thousands of youngsters. He was coach of the George Washington High School tennis team for seven seasons and also directed and managed Heather Ridge Racquet Club for nearly a decade. Many of his students have achieved national rankings, some have played college tennis, and two of Irwin's students have played professional tennis.

Irwin was awarded the CTA's most prestigious award, the Bud Robineau Award in 1980 for service to the tennis community, and in 2000, was honored by the Colorado Youth Tennis Foundation for his longtime contributions to junior tennis in Colorado.