

## **Remarks in NY at ITA Award Ceremony - by Jon Erickson**

I am truly honored and humbled by being selected for this prestigious award. I want to thank the ITA and its Executive Director, David Benjamin, the Award selection panel, the International Tennis Hall of Fame as hosts, and the sponsor, Rolex Watch. You folks do a fantastic job! I also want to thank, Michigan's Men's Tennis Coach, Bruce Berque, for nominating me. No one gets anywhere worthwhile on their own -- they are always helped by those who care. I have always been surrounded by some of the best, including my wife of 48 years. I owe what I am to Jesus Christ, who wants us all in His eternal family.

My varsity tennis at the University of Michigan was in 1957, 58, and 59 - some 52 or more years ago, and I **can't** say it seems like yesterday.

College is a time when many seek an identity -- I wanted to find who I was, what I wanted to be, and how to make a difference in the world by serving others. Varsity tennis at Michigan provided opportunity for structure, friendships and challenges while I searched within myself for **my answers** to these questions.

I learned that self-esteem and confidence come from knowing you can be successful if you work hard, whether in tennis or a career serving others **via** science and engineering.

I had fun in college tennis. Fun and meaning come from the relationships we build with people. It starts with respect, treating others the way you want to be treated, and cooperation or teamwork. Teamwork, so important in **my achievements** and today's workplace, was a lesson from varsity tennis. In 1957, our team won the NCAA Nationals by having the best player, Barry Mackay, by helping each other improve during the year, and by being motivated by the team's success. This re-emphasized for me that helping others **leads to a meaningful life** and life-long friendships. Our team has held many reunions over the years because we remain friends.

A lesson from varsity tennis was that ~~if~~ you will serve better and accomplish more in science and engineering, if you proactively influence your future by setting goals and working to achieve them rather than reacting to the best shots of others or as life happens to you.

Tennis taught me perseverance would be critical for success. I failed many times in life, but tennis had taught me you only truly fail, **if** you fail to keep trying.

Time management and setting priorities were skills I learned from college tennis. Tennis, engineering classes, and working a job were three time demands that taught me how to manage my time **in order to survive**. These skills were later indispensable to my career, family and volunteer service efforts.

Again, thank you so much for selecting me for this honor.

Jon D. Erickson