



† Donald 'Don' PIKE

Tennis Seniors SA Life Membership Awarded 1999

Don excelled in his service to the Veterans Tennis Association SA both as an elite player and a leading administrator and was awarded Life Membership of the South Australian Veterans Tennis Association (now Tennis Seniors SA Association) in 1999.

Don joined the Veterans Tennis Association in 1981. He played a leading role in the administration of the Veterans SA Association over several years. He was President during 1991/92/93, and was Vice President in 1990 and 1994, and served on the committee for 6 years.

Don was the Tournament Director of the Australian Veterans Tennis Championships in 1986 and acted as the President of the Australasian Veterans Tennis Championships Committee in 1994.

Don was the Tournament Director of the inaugural SA Seniors Championships in 1987 and continued as Director in 1988 and 1989. He was a selector for the South Australian Veterans Teams playing in Veteran Events for several years. Don also represented the SA Veterans Association in its interactions with the South Australian Tennis Association.

Don was a member of the Committee that established the new Tennis Complex at Park 20 for the South Australian Veterans Association. South Australia was the first state veterans Association to develop its own tennis centre.

Don's tennis achievements are impressive. He won several Championships in the SA Veterans Tennis Tournament – Five times Singles Champion, three times Doubles Champion and three times Mixed Doubles Champion in the 55+ and 60+ age groups.

He was also successful at the National and International levels. In the 1994 Australian Championships Don reached the finals of the 60+ Doubles Championship and the semifinals of the Singles and Mixed

Doubles 60+ Championships. In 1998 Don was proud to reach the final of the 65+ Australian Singles Championship by beating four highly credentialled players and was a quarter finalist in the 65+ Men's Doubles Championship. Don also captained the winning 65+ Men's Team in the 1995 Australian Teams Events and was a triple Gold Medallist in the 2nd Australian Masters Games.

Don represented Australia in the Von Cramm Cup, playing in the Australian team in the USA in 1994 and in Austria in 1995.

In ITF World Seniors Individual Championships Don was a semifinalist in the 1994 Doubles Championship in the USA, and a quarterfinalist in both the 1995 Singles and Doubles Championships in the UK.

Don was born in 1933 and his family settled in Colonel Light Gardens. His father died in Tobruk in WW2 and Don's mother raised her family alone under the guidance of Legacy. Don was a natural sportsman and excelled at Colonel Light Gardens Primary School in football, cricket, and tennis. He continued his Secondary Education at Unley High School and developed his football and tennis skills. He played for Sturt Football Club from 1955 to 1959 as well as winning several awards in the Northern Football League.

Don took advantage of a Junior Tennis Programme at Reade Park Lawn Tennis Club in 1948, and his long-term association with tennis began. Don devoted much of his time to tennis administration and has held positions on many committees, including SA Veterans Tennis and Metro Lawn Tennis Association. He received a Life Membership of Metro Lawn Tennis Association (in addition to his Veterans Tennis Life Membership). In 2000 Don received the Australian Sports Medal for services to tennis.

Professionally Don became a teacher, and he taught History and English, and served as Sports master at Westminster School for many years, retiring in 1993.

Don has recorded a list of achievements that has given him most satisfaction. They include:

Playing a central role in boosting SA Tennis Vets from 50 members to over 600 members during the 90's and early 2000's.

Receiving an Australian Blazer and playing No 1 for Australia in California in 1994 and again in Austria in 1995 at No 3.

Going 3 sets in 3 hours with World ranked No 1 Henri Crochet in Von Cramm Cup 1994.

Having 1994 Australasian Championships generally proclaimed "biggest and best ever Championships" to that point after all the hard work.

Sadly in 2002 Don's tennis playing days ended when he succumbed to a heart attack while playing in the SA Veterans Tournament. His achievements in Seniors Tennis present a proud legacy for Don.

Sources:

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