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BREAKING THE BARRIERS

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PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MONICA L. NEWBY

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are” said Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the United States. When you talk with or hear of individuals who see a need or have a desire to impact their community and act on it, President Roosevelt’s quote captures what drives them to do what they do. Other factors that spur them to action include determination, thinking outside the box, persistence, belief in the end goal, and passion to break barriers to make their dream a reality. Such was the motivation of Betty J. Newby, a native Cincinnati and founder of TOPSPIN Inc., a Cincinnati, not-for-profit organization dedicated to serving and developing youth by leveraging the sport of tennis.

For her efforts, Newby was recently honored at the area’s first Breaking the Barriers Reception held at the Lindner Family Tennis Center in Mason, Ohio during the 2010 W&SFG Masters & Women’s Open tournament. Presented by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) and the Western & Southern Financial Group (W&SFG) Masters & Women’s Open, more than 100 were in attendance at the reception honoring Newby including Kevin Clayton, USTA Chief Diversity Officer, and Bruce Flory, W&SFG Tournament Director.

At the reception, Ms. Newby was presented the Dexter Adams Award for her courage and efforts to make a positive impact in the community. “When you are doing something that you love, I don’t



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look for recognition....I was never looking for anything like this.” Newby shares with *AboutGreaterCincinnati.com*. “I’m very blessed and very thankful...I’m truly honored that they selected me...I’m very grateful to everyone who supported the idea and assisted in the development of the concept of TOPSPIN.”

Said Newby, “When you are doing some of what you love in life, and can in turn help others, life is truly grand.” And help others she did. Newby founded TOPSPIN in the late ‘70’s. For five years and guided by her personal mantra – “Rest if you must but do not quit”, Newby’s efforts, tenacity, passion for the

game along with an arsenal of dedicated supporters, engaged area tennis enthusiasts in keeping many area youth motivated and stimulated by leveraging the sport of tennis. TOPSPIN’s goals:

- creation and development of one-on-one character building between the youth and adult tennis players;
- acquaintance of youth with professional tennis instruction, training, tournaments, and organized play;
- exposure to professional play at events like the ATP, and other Championship events; and
- awarding educational scholarships to deserving youth.

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The first Breaking the Barriers held in Cincinnati drew 100 people from all facets of the Cincinnati community as well as from the USTA.

(Left – right): Bruce Flory, W&SFG tournament director; Tony Nimmons, coordinator of USTA Officials Department; Ayrenne Adams, daughter of award namesake; Dexter Adams, Jr., son of award namesake; Betty J. Newby, Breaking the Barriers—Cincinnati honoree; and Kevin Clayton, USTA Chief Diversity Officer;

“She [Newby] was selected because of her courage and desire in making sure that tennis was connected to the urban communities.” Kevin Clayton, Chief Diversity Officer for the USTA, tells *AboutGreaterCincinnati.com*. “She stood up against some really challenging odds in the community to make sure that tennis was available for everybody.”

Breaking the Barriers, a USTA Diversity and Inclusion initiative, is a signature event connecting USTA tournaments with the local community. “We [USTA] want to recognize people in the communities that have broken barriers along diversity and inclusion.” said Clayton. “Our Diversity and Inclusion platform expands beyond just players...Our focus area is to grow tennis and make it look like America...We want to recognize the contributions that other people have made to our society.”

The Dexter Adams Award presented to Betty J. Newby at the Cincinnati Breaking the Barriers event is named after the late Dexter Curtis “D.C.” Adams, a former Procter & Gamble Senior Purchasing Manager in Cincinnati, who was tragically killed in a plane crash in 1997. An advocate for community, public service, and diversity, Adams, a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and Southern Missionary Baptist Church, had a passion for tennis and served as a volunteer official for the USTA and officiated tennis matches at the US Open. He also supported the Inner City Tennis Project, a program that provides an affordable tennis experience to children in Greater Cincinnati, with an emphasis on increasing participation of inner city youth.

The USTA’s first Breaking the Barriers event was held in 2009

in New York. Since then, USTA Breaking the Barriers events have been held during USTA tournaments in Atlanta, Los Angeles, and now Cincinnati. Breaking the Barriers will be an annual celebration to honor those who are committed to positively impacting the world. Each event takes on the personality of the host community and Breaking the Barriers recipients are determined by local community groups.

The next Breaking the Barriers event will be held in New York on September 7th at the US Open. The 2010 Breaking the Barriers Awards Reception at the US Open will honor Hank Aaron, Baseball Icon and Entrepreneur; Judy Levering, first female President of the USTA; and Ralph de la Vega, Corporate and Civic Trailblazer.

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