

# GrassrootsTennis

## NJTL NETWORK

### Play It Forward!

As NJTL turns 50 this year, we celebrate the people who continue to create a legacy of learning and tennis.



## SKIP HARTMAN

### Transforming Tennis into a Lifetime Sport

**S**kip Hartman got into the tennis business to make money. In 1969, he persuaded the New York City Parks Department to transform public park courts into winter facilities by bubbling them. At the time, he says, “It was pretty easy to find capital. ... I thought it would be easy to raise money and go public.”

“By the time we were ready to put a shovel in the ground, the stock market had leveled off and started to go down. Of course, there was a recession.”

But Hartman persevered, and it was his passion for the sport of tennis that

got him involved in NJTL. In 1970, he was asked to sponsor a program for youngsters, which he quickly expanded to his other indoor clubs. Then, in 1971, Hartman co-founded New York Junior Tennis & Learning with Arthur Ashe.

Hartman says the educational component to NJTL is his biggest contribution of all.

“Tennis worked magically in the New York City public schools system. It took tennis from being a recreational sport in the parks to being a lifetime sport that every kid in school ought to be exposed to.” —*Erin Maher*

Visit [USTAFoundation.com](http://USTAFoundation.com) for more on the 50th anniversary of the NJTL network.



## DONNA FALES

### Changing Thousands of Lives in Miami

**D**onna Fales was in New York in the 1960s and knew Sheridan Snyder, Arthur Ashe and Charlie Pasarell, who founded the National Junior Tennis and Learning network (NJTL) in 1968. Later, she moved to Miami, and Snyder “talked me into getting involved in a Miami [NJTL] chapter” in 1974. Fales became president in 1975, serving in that role until 1989.

“From 1983 to ’85, I was CEO and president for NJTL at the national level, when [NJTL] was independent of the USTA and had various sponsors,” she says.

When NJTL merged with the USTA, Fales became chairman of the national committee from 1985 to 1988.

Meanwhile, the NJTL in Miami became the Greater Miami Tennis Foundation, where Fales served as president then as executive director. She estimates that from 1974 until she retired in 2005, the Miami organization got about 35,000 youngsters playing tennis and “gave \$80,000 to \$100,000 in scholarships.”

“Any time you can be responsible for putting 35,000 kids on court, you’ve done something,” she says. “And if you change one person’s life, you’ve done something.” —*Sally Milano*