

Billie Jean King



Photo: Howard Schatz, 2019

Billie Jean King is the founder of the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative. She has long been a champion for social change and equality. King created new inroads for all genders in sports and beyond during her legendary career and she continues to make her mark today.

King was named one of the “100 Most Important Americans of the 20th Century” by *Life* magazine and, in 2009, in recognition of her work as a social justice pioneer and her accomplishments in sports, President Obama awarded her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor.

In 2014, King, and her partner, Ilana Kloss, launched the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative to address equality and inclusion issues in the workplace. King and Kloss are part of the ownership group of the Los Angeles Dodgers, Los Angeles Sparks, Angel City FC and the Philadelphia Freedoms.

King grew up playing tennis in the California public parks and won 39 Grand Slam titles during her career. She helped form the Virginia Slims Series and founded the Women’s Tennis Association. She defeated Bobby Riggs in one of the greatest moments in sports history—the Battle of the Sexes on September 20, 1973.

In 2017, Fox Searchlight released the critically acclaimed film, *Battle of the Sexes*, starring Academy Award® winner Emma Stone as King and Academy Award® nominee Steve Carrell as Bobby Riggs, which depicts both players’ battles on and off the court as well as the cultural and social impact of the groundbreaking match.

In 1974, King co-founded World TeamTennis, the revolutionary professional team tennis league. That same year she also founded the Women’s Sports Foundation. In August 2006, the National Tennis Center, home of the US Open, was renamed the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in honor of her accomplishments on and off the court. In 2014 President Obama named King to the Presidential Delegation for the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. In 2018, King received a Lifetime Achievement Award as part of the prestigious BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards. King serves on the board of the Women’s Sports Foundation and is a past member of the board of the Elton John AIDS Foundation and a past member of the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition.