



News Release



Friday, September 23, 2011

WTA AND FAMILY CIRCLE CUP ANNOUNCE REUNION OF ORIGINAL 9 DURING 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF FAMILY CIRCLE CUP

WTA Founder Billie Jean King and other members of Original 9 to celebrate over 40 years of women's professional tennis

ST. PETERSBURG, FL - Forty-one years ago today, on September 23, 1970, women's professional tennis was born when nine players, called the Original 9 and led by Billie Jean King, signed symbolic \$1 contracts with the late Gladys Heldman, publisher of World Tennis publications, to compete on the newly-created Virginia Slims Circuit.

To celebrate this historic day, the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) and the Family Circle Cup today announced that a reunion of the Original 9 will take place April 6-8, 2012, during the final weekend of the Family Circle Cup. WTA Founder Billie Jean King will be in attendance, along with Rosemary Casals, Peaches Bartkowicz, Judy Dalton, Valerie Ziegenfuss, and Julie Heldman. Other members of the Original 9, Nancy Richey, Kerry Melville, and Kristy Pigeon, are also expected to attend.

"When the Original 9 signed our one-dollar contracts with Gladys Heldman, we envisioned a bright future for women's professional tennis, and the women who compete on the WTA today are living our dream," King said. "I am proud the nine of us stood together with a vision for the future more than 40 years ago and I look forward to our gathering at the Family Circle Cup."

The Family Circle Cup, a WTA premier event in Charleston, S.C., will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2012. Family Circle is the longest-running title sponsor on the WTA. The Original 9 reunion will be co-hosted by the WTA, the Women's Tennis Benefits Association (WTBA) and the Family Circle Cup.

"As one of the longest-running tournaments on the WTA, the Family Circle Cup is one of our most prestigious events and a favorite amongst all players, both former and active," said Stacey Allaster, Chairman and CEO of the WTA. "With such a rich history and tradition, it's only fitting that this reunion of the Original 9, celebrating over 40 years of women's professional tennis, should take place at the Family Circle Cup. I congratulate the tournament on 40 spectacular years and thank Family Circle for its continued support of women's tennis."

"In celebrating our 40th anniversary, the Family Circle Cup is thrilled to host the reunion of the Original 9," said Bob Moran, Tournament Director of the Family Circle Cup. "This event has been around for almost as long as women's professional tennis. It's more than just a tennis tournament. It's a celebration of women's tennis, and we are proud to honor these nine incredible champions at the Family Circle Cup."

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The WTA is the global leader in women's professional sport with more than 2,400 players representing 99 nations competing for more than \$90 million in prize money at the WTA's 53 events and four Grand Slams in 33 countries. More than 5 million people attended women's tennis events in 2010 with tens of millions more watching on television and digital channels around the world. The WTA competitive season concludes with the TEB BNP Paribas WTA Championships in Istanbul, Turkey, from October 25-30, and the Commonwealth Bank Tournament of Champions in Bali, Indonesia, from November 3-6. Further information on the WTA can be found on www.wtatennis.com.

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