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*Tennis Serves Senior Champion*  
**MARGARET CANBY**

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Out of more than 100,000 Brookdale community residents across the country, Margaret Canby may be the only one who has been a senior since the age of 35.

We should explain.

During her lifetime she has played a sport in which most stars are in their teens and late 20s. The first age bracket for competitors in the amateur “Senior” league is age 35 to 40, with brackets going all the way up to age 90.

At age 81, Canby is still at the top of her game having won the 2014 Women’s Hard Court Nationals – plus the first place title in the doubles category. She also won a doubles world championship title in 2013, plus another singles tennis championship the same year. In a USTA News interview, Canby marveled, “I never expected anything like that would happen to me.”

In her lifetime she has won 40 tennis championships so far – on clay courts, grass courts and hard courts. Competitions have taken her around the world to tournaments as far away as Australia, Turkey and Eastern Europe. At age 81, she still plays six times a week.

Considering that her love of the game began when she was nine years old, Canby has played for a remarkable length of 72 years. She discovered tennis as a young girl in San Antonio. “The courts were about three blocks from my house. I asked for a racquet and began going over to the courts and trying to learn. I never had formal lessons,” she says.

During high school and college her tennis play continued, but took a back seat to other activities including competition on the swim team and serving as a drum majorette in the university band at Texas A&M Kingsville.

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Margaret Canby with her husband, Dr. John Canby.



After college she married newly graduated physician Dr. John Canby. When he joined the army in 1954, his career took both of them to assignments at 13 base hospitals across the globe including Germany, India, Australia and Thailand.

Fortunately for Canby, her husband was also a tennis player. They discovered tennis gave them a way to connect with new people at each station. In a USTA News article, Canby explained, “The quickest way to make friends is to go to the local tennis courts and ask to join in the fun. Tennis was a wonderful way for me to meet the most interesting people.” In Germany, tennis court fees were prohibitively expensive, so the Canbys played after midnight when the rates were lower.

Upon return to the U.S., they settled back in San Antonio. There, her volunteer work for the San Antonio chapter of the U.S. Tennis Association took on various roles from serving as a referee

to eventually becoming the chapter president, running leagues for 13 years. During her tenure, she doubled the size of the leagues and offered adaptive game versions for kindergarten children, wounded military veterans, and senior citizens. “Now...it’s a hired job that can pay \$40,000 a year,” she says.

All the while the Canbys raised three high-achieving children. Their son, John, is a West Point graduate, now serving as a Lt. Colonel in the Army Reserves. Daughter Charlee is an Annapolis graduate and a Captain in the Naval Reserves. Their youngest, Robert is a cardiologist specializing in electro-treatment.

Canby promotes tennis among people of all age groups. She tells high school girls, “You know, this is the greatest sport there is. And you can do it for the rest of your life. It’s such fun, and it only takes one other person to be able to do it.”

“The more you exercise, the better the life you’re going to have. I think it’s really important to stay active, and tennis does that. I played golf. But golf can take four hours to do. And in an hour and a half I can get in lots of exercise and finish a tennis set or two, maybe three,” she says when advocating the sport for seniors.

Canby gives seniors a special tip, noting their advantage of mind over body. “To me, it’s like a chess game. I have to figure out what they (her opponents) do well and where I can move them so I can get a point. And the older you get, that’s the game you have to play because you can’t hit as hard as a young person.”

The Canbys are currently Brookdale residents. “It’s a fabulous place to live because it has so much to offer,” she says. This Brookdale fan particularly enjoys the community pool and enjoys the support she gets from her Brookdale neighbors. When the San Antonio newspaper published an article about her winning accomplishments, her neighbors wanted to be sure she saw the paper. “When I got home, there must have been 25 issues in my mailbox,” she says.

Canby advocates tennis play for her Brookdale friends, and the fitness director at her Brookdale community now includes tennis outings on the activities calendar.

“We’ve gotten some of our residents to come down and hit that ball over the net. It’s wonderful for balance, and hand-eye coordination. And they’re having a good time at it. Most seniors say, ‘Oh, I don’t play tennis at my age.’ But they can play, and it’s great fun. I’ve gone with them to different senior places around town, and

they have a great time. And they want to beat each other,” she added with a laugh.

But Canby stresses the social benefits of playing. “You’re out there for more than just winning. You want to meet people and have a good time and enjoy yourself. And that’s what it’s all about,” she says.

Her husband now suffers impairments in short-term memory from dementia, however, Canby says “He’s healthy and he goes and plays tennis with me every Tuesday.”

In a USTA News article, Canby said, “I hope I can play tennis as long as I live.” We hold that hope for her as well.

Tennis has served her for so many years of her life, and we at Brookdale wish Margaret Canby many serves and volleys in 2015.

