

“WOW, MY TENNIS BUDDIES WILL NEVER BELIEVE THIS”
by Vern Schooley

As many of our members have realized, there has been a certain stillness descend over the weekend courts the last few months. If you haven't recognized the cause, it has been the absence of Vern Schooley while he is on the mend from his full hip prosthesis. Brenda Danielson conducted a little investigating to see what an active tennis player does without tennis, other than schedule matches for the others in his group. It turns out he has been busy.

We found out that Vern and Trish recently attended an Award Ceremony held in the US Supreme Court, with Justice Ginsberg as host. Vern was selected for a prestigious national award for his extraordinary leadership of judges and attorneys in promoting civility and professionalism in the practice of law. Even then, Vern didn't forget his tennis friends. As the 330 judges, attorneys and guests gathered in the Supreme Court, attired in formal wear, the first two recipients of lesser awards kicked off proceedings with their erudite speeches. Vern was then graciously introduced by a judge from the Court of Appeals who hears all patent appeal from any trial court in the United States. The energy level picked up as Vern took the podium below the Supreme Court Bench to address Justice Ginsberg and the assembled audience. He lightened things up immensely by then turning away from the podium to look up at those nine empty seats where the highest judges in the land sit when the Court is in session, exclaiming:

“My Tennis Buddies Will Never Believe This”

That warmed the audience up for the rest of Vern's talk before everyone recessed to the Great Hall and West Conference Room for a five course dinner served on china bearing the Supreme Court Seal. As Vern told the audience, it was a very humbling experience and something he will remember the rest of his life.

Vern has met Justice Ginsberg previously and knows she is reluctant to have her picture taken or give out her signature. Vern took the chance, however, to strike up an extended conversation about the California Supreme Court Justices before asking, “do you have a sense of humor?” Her rather stern response was, “it depends.” That was when he pulled out a copy of a photo shopped photo, that Member Tom Maulhardt had prepared, interposing Vern as the Chief Judge. It was some relief when she actually cracked a slight smile and offered to autograph the photo.