

GIGI FERNANDEZ

Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Gigi Fernandez was first introduced to tennis on her seventh birthday with tennis lessons as a gift from her parents. After a year at Clemson University, where she reached the NCAA finals as a freshman, she turned professional in 1983, becoming Puerto Rico's first female professional athlete, in any sport.

After an illustrious career, Gigi retired at the Chase Championships in 1997, ranked #1 in the world in doubles. She had been consistently ranked #1 or #2 since April, 1991. She holds seventeen Grand Slam doubles crowns and two Olympic Gold Medals! She was voted Puerto Rican female Athlete of the Century. She was recently voted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame and will be inducted in July 2010.

Gigi was best known as a doubles specialist, although she surprised fans by reaching the singles semi-finals of the 1994 Wimbledon Championships, and the singles quarter-finals twice at U.S. Open.

After retiring, Gigi continued her involvement in Tennis by coaching the Puerto Rican Fed Cup team and mentoring several young Puerto Rican aspiring pros. She was the Head Women's Tennis Coach at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida for three years and coached top WTA doubles team Lisa Raymond and Sam Stosur. She is also remains active in corporate hospitality events and participates in fundraising events throughout the country.

Gigi has many outside interests including golf, skiing, web design, fine dining and promoting active lifestyles. She is the founder of Baby Goes Pro, a DVD series that introduces young children to sports encouraging them to lead active lifestyles, build character and being a lifelong love of sports. Gigi just completed her Masters in Business Administration (MBA) at Rollins College in Winter Park, Fl. She is the proud mother of twins, Karson Xavier and Madison Jane.

HIGHLIGHTS

SEVENTEEN GRAND SLAM TITLES

1997, 1995, 1994, 1993, 1992, 1991 FRENCH OPEN CHAMPION - Ladies Doubles
1994 and 1993 AUSTRALIAN OPEN CHAMPION - Ladies Doubles
1996, 1995, 1992, 1990, 1988 U.S. OPEN CHAMPION - Ladies Doubles
1997, 1994, 1993 and 1992 WIMBLEDON CHAMPION - Ladies Doubles

OLYMPIC HIGHLIGHTS

1996 and 1992 OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALS - Ladies Doubles (with Mary Joe Fernandez)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Voted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame (Induction 7-10)
Puerto Rican Female Athlete of the Century
Member of the I.T.A. Intercollegiate Tennis Hall of Fame
Member of the Puerto Rico Sports Hall of Fame
Member of the Clemson University Athletic Hall of Fame
Member United States Federation Cup Team – 1990-1991-1992-1994-1995-1996-1997
Member United States Wightman Cup Team - 1987-1992
Member of the US Olympic Team - 1992-1996

Member Puerto Rican Olympic Team 1984
WTA Doubles Team of the Year Award with different partners – 1991-1993,1994, 1995 & 1997

Named to Top 50 “All ACC Team”

Personal Best Award - Clairol – 1992 (Award given to the US Olympian who most exemplifies achievement beyond the field of sport)

Colorado Sportswoman of the Year - 1992

The Eagle Award for Excellence in Sports, 1992

National Hispanic Heritage, Presidential Tribute - 1992

Puerto Rico Most Influential Woman Nominee - 1991

Comeback Player of the Year Nominee - WTA - 1987

Most Improved Player Nominee- WTA - 1986

Most Impressive Newcomer Nominee - WTA - 1985

Tennis Magazine Player to Watch - Selection - 1985

Flag Bearer Pan American Games - 1983