

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Life Membership of Squash & Racquetball Victoria (S&RV) is a public acknowledgement of the direct contribution someone has made to squash and/or racquetball in Victoria over an extended period of time. This contribution can be in the form of playing, coaching, refereeing, administration or a general contribution.

Noelle Bartling

Noelle had a squash career spanning 31 years, firstly at Balwyn Squash Courts, then Camberwell, Bennetswood and later through Masters at Hunts and finally at Doncaster. She played as high as No 3 State 1 and late in her career, won an A Grade Victorian Title.

She coached ladies daytime at the Golden Bowl Centre. From the 1970's to 1990's Noelle edited VWSRA, SRAV (now S&RV) and VMSA magazines and newsletters as well as producing numerous newspaper articles. Noelle was also a major part in the organisation (and promotion of) Australian Tours by English and South African women's teams. She was also involved in the Trade Credits Tournaments of the early 80's.

Noelle joined the VMSA committee in 1982 and as well as organising their annual ball down to the last detail, was also the prime mover in arranging social and official functions when Melbourne hosted international events.

In 1983, the VMSA hosted the Australian Open Championships. Noelle convinced Sun Alliance and Tooheys Brewery to be sponsors and was, of course, part of the daily running of the tournament. Vicki (Hoffman) Cardwell and Dean Williams won the event. She arranged an excellent report in the daily press, which was unusual publicity for squash in those days. She had a way with words which ensured her articles were always popular reading.

Noelle was an integral member of the 'team' whose efforts over many years brought women's and men's squash together. Her efforts, largely in the publicity arena, were instrumental in shaping and growing the sport of squash in this era.

Ken Bolle

- Sixteen years of service as a venue operator – Owning and managing the Doncaster Squash and Racquetball Centre from 1971-1987, which was the benchmark for squash facilities in this country.
- Involved with numerous activities which had an enormous impact on the sport of squash, including the introduction of various inter club pennant competitions in non-prime time, such as; Friday Morning Ladies, Saturday Afternoon and the Xmas/New Year period.
- Ken and his wife Zoe developed world class junior development programs, which led to Doncaster being the top junior club in the state and provided the most number of teams into the interclub junior pennant competitions, plus large numbers of players for Victorian junior teams.
- The Doncaster Squash Centre, via Ken and one of his staff members Margaret Smith, was heavily involved with the establishment of the Victorian Master's (then Mature Age) interclub Thursday Night Pennant competition, in conjunction with the Eastern Metropolitan Squash Racquets Association (EMSRA), and the Victorian Squash Court Owners Eastern Region. This competition was a few years later handed over to the Victorian Masters Squash Association.
- For many years, the Doncaster Squash Centre had the largest Women's and Junior clubs within Australia.
- Ken was also heavily involved with the Victorian Squash Court Owners Association, as a board member, plus initiated several valuable promotions for the sport.

- The Doncaster Squash and Racquetball Centre was one of the first three venues to embrace racquetball, both socially and through the various interclub pennant competitions.

Jim Bristow

- 45 years of service as a squash player, administrator and venue operator.
- Heavily involved with the establishment of Masters Squash within Australia.
- President of the Victorian Masters Squash Association (VMSA) for 15 years.
- State Grade squash player for 35 years.
- Manager of the Ivanhoe Squash Centre.
- Sport Coordinator for the 2002 World Masters Games Squash Competition held in Melbourne.

Chris Fuhrmeister

- 40 years of service as a player, venue operator, administrator, promoter and coach for both squash and racquetball.
- For the first 15 years of his 40 year squash playing career Chris worked for the SEC where he received several promotions which required transfers to various SEC district offices across the state. Luckily at each town he was located to they had a squash centre, so he was in his element, playing in every in house competition possible.
- For the past 25 years he has participated in every in house racquetball competition possible at his own complex
- Chris who has owned and operated the Lakes Squash & Movie Centre since 1990, adding on a 146 seat deluxe cinema in 1999, has been an outstanding promoter of both squash and racquetball, so much so that he conducts 11 in house competitions twice per year, including 4 senior and 2 junior racquetball, plus 4 senior and 1 junior squash pennant competitions, as well as having extremely large numbers attending his morning ladies and school programs for both sports.
- One thing he noticed very early on about his club members was that they did not play tournaments which he believed held them back from reaching their full potential.
- In 1993 he established the Lakes Racquetball Classic and twenty two years on, it is revered by all racquetballers and a must attend event that closes each year's tournament circuit.
- Not long after Chris took over the Centre he introduced his 500 Club for players who play 500 matches in their in house pennant competitions. In 1998 he became the first player to attain that award. By the end of 2014 ten racquetballers and fourteen squash players have joined the 500 Club, with only Mark Edgley and Chris playing 500 matches in each sport.
- For his squash players Chris established the first East Gippsland team in 1995 to participate in the Hopman Cup which it has done for every year since, with the vast majority of players coming from his home club, annexing three titles along the way; Division three in 2006/2012, Division two in 2013, plus rising to Division one in 2014.
- His club has also been a very strong supporter of the long standing Gippsland Team's Championships (hosted by the Moe Squash Club every year), plus from 2011 to 2013, hosting the prestigious Victorian Country Individual Squash Championships.
- Chris has encouraged his club members to support other centre's events; and they realise that to encourage players to their events, they must support all the other tournaments. During 2014 the Victorian Racquetball Committee was formed and Chris was elected as its inaugural Chairman, plus was appointed as one of three Victorians on to the Racquetball Australia Board. He is recognised in the racquetball community as the Godfather of Victorian Racquetball.

- Chris has been a very competitive squash player for the past forty years, a very competent singles and doubles racquetball player for the past twenty five years, plus an outstanding venue operator, promoter, administrator and marketer of both sports; an amazing contributor.

Patricia Hunt

Twenty years of service as a Player/Administrator/Event Management

- Started playing squash in 1960 at twelve years of age in C Grade pennant for Cheltenham, and then quickly moved through the ranks to number 1 in A Grade for Brighton, which was the highest grade in those days.
- In 1967, Tricia won the Victorian Junior Women's Championship and was runner-up in the Australian Junior Women's Championship.
- The Interstate Junior Teams event did not commence until 1970, but in 1966 at the age of 18, Tricia was selected into the Victorian State team and remained a member of that team through to 1973, plus along the way attained the position of No. 1 State A Grade for several years, many of them at the Hunt family courts in Fitzroy.
- In 1971 Tricia commenced her involvement in squash administration, as a committee member on the Victorian Women's Squash Rackets Association (VWSRA), which was started in 1952 by Betty Meagher.

From when squash in Victoria in 1913 until the mid 1950's, the sport was virtually only played in private clubs which women were not allowed to enter, so they ran their own competitions and events and affiliated with the Australian Women's Squash Rackets Association(AWSRA).

On 30th November 1972 Tricia was elected President of the VWSRA a position she held until November 1976, when the VWSRA merged with the men's association the Squash Rackets Association of Victoria(SRAV) to become the Victorian Squash Rackets Association(VSRA), which required an enormous amount of skill, diplomacy and determination by her and the then SRAV President Sid Myers.

Tricia proved to be an outstanding and popular leader, plus determined that women would be accepted on an equal basis and not just absorbed by the men's association, which is what happened and a healthy and progressive association evolved, which was the forerunner to the national men's and women's associations amalgamating in May 1981. At the first meeting of the VSRA Tricia was elected as its Vice President and appointed Chair of the Victorian Tournament Committee.

Tricia's very successful administration period in the sport ended during 1978 when she decided to step down and devote her time to her two young boys and teaching position at Chavoin College, but remained playing No.1 State 1 for Hunts Squash Centre.

Ian Kitto

Ian Kitto started his squash career in 1981 in Mooroopna, where 3 years later he took on the role of Club President for the next 3 years. After resigning as President Ian remained heavily involved in the Club taking on the Secretary position and was a major player in the organisation of Mooroopna junior tournaments. With 3 children and his wife all playing squash at the same time, there were always tournaments on weekends in Melbourne, Wangaratta, Bendigo etc where he not only took his children but other juniors as well.

While at Mooroopna he played many team and individual tournaments playing at a high standard for club level

until such time as the Mooroopna centre closed down. Ian then ventured to Shepparton and was one of the founding members of the GV Squash Club taking on the role of Vice President. Early on, Ian developed the player management software package which the club still uses today. An active member of the club and still Vice President, Ian has enjoyed many years of squash with good friends and family.

Sylvie O'Neale

Forty Three years of service as a Player/Administrator/Venue Manager/Records Officer.

Noelle Bartling, the Editor of VicSquash, most aptly described Sylvie as follows; "What Sylvie doesn't know about squash and the people in it, you could fit in your left ear."

- Heavily involved with the restructuring of the Victorian Schoolgirls competition in 1972.
- A member of the 1975 Australian Championships Tournament Committee.
- Captain of the Victorian Women's team that won the National Team's Championships in 1975, the first time Victoria had won it since 1964.
- Served as the Registrar on the VWSRA State Pennant Committee.
- Mother of Champion player Lesley Chapman (nee O'Neale).
- Manager of the Gardenvale Squash Centre.
- VWSRA Committee member for eight years.
- Heavily involved in the establishment of the Victorian Masters Squash Association (VMSA), which was founded in 1980.
- Records Officer of the VMSA for 22 years.
- Committee member of the VMSA for 20 years.
- Represented Victoria in several Master's teams at the Australian Masters Championships.
- Treasurer/Committee Member of the Australian Masters Squash Association (AMSA).

Shane Skidmore

- 36 years of service as a player, coach and administrator for both squash and racquetball, with all involvement being at a voluntary level.
- Played interclub squash pennant for 20 years, including 6 years in state grade, highest level achieved was State 4.
- Played interclub racquetball pennant for 12 years, highest level achieved was Premier Grade.
- President, Treasurer, Secretary and Committee Member of Burwood and Wattle Park Squash and Racquetball Clubs over a 10 year period.
- Victorian Squash League Committee Member for 3 years.
- Men's State Grade Squash Match and Pennant Chairman for 4 years, plus a further 3 years as a Committee Member.
- Life Member of the Wattle Park and Knox Park Squash and Racquetball Clubs.
- Victorian Racquetball Tournament Committee Member for the past 6 years.
- Tournament Director of the Victorian, ESRA, Knox Park and Mt. District Racquetball Open Championships over the past 7 years.
- Victorian Racquetball Tournament Circuit Technical Director for the past 7 years.
- Racquetball Australia National Racquetball Tournament Circuit Committee Member for the past 6 years.
- Conducted racquetball junior coaching clinics for 4 years at Knox Park Squash and Racquetball Centre.
- Recently developed a Tournament Match Development Program which is now utilised in all racquetball tournaments and is available F.O. C. for Squash events as well.

Brendan Woodford

Fifty two years of service as a Player/ Professional Coach/Venue Operator/Administrator/Referee/Publicity Officer.

- Started playing squash in 1961 coached by Hudson Pitt and played his first pennant match in F Reserve for Gardenvale then remained as a player for 25 years rising to State 1 No. 1 for 10 years.
- Affectionately known as 'Arab' and believes his toughest opponent was Chuck 1.
- He became a Professional Coach in 1967 and did not stop coaching until 2013.
- A member of the Tournament Committee which ran the inaugural World Men's Amateur Squash Championships in Melbourne in 1967.
- In 1971 went to Darwin to conduct coaching clinics to help improve the numbers playing and their level of play, with one of his pupils being Steve Bowditch, who won the 1981 World Amateur Championship and was inducted into the Squash Australia Hall of Fame in 2015.
- In 1972/73 coached the Victorian Junior Women's squads.
- In 1973 became Victoria's first full time professional coach, coaching at up to 11 centres.
- From 1974-1977 he conducted coaching clinics and courses for the Victorian Education Department's Teaching Colleges at Monash and Melbourne Universities.
- In 1975 appointed Publicity Officer for the SRAV.
- In 1976 went into partnership with Ray Lewis at the Gardenvale Squash Centre, but still fulfilled his coaching commitments at other centres. He then went on to also lease the Malvern Squash Centre until its closure in 2013.
- President of the Southern Squash League for 15 years, and a Victorian Squash Federation Board member for 5 years.

John Wreford

- 35 years of service as a venue operator, innovator and administrator for squash, racquetball and other court sports.
- Proprietor, in conjunction with Harrie Huxtable, of the Waverley Squash Spa (15 courts) for 30 years, which was recognized as one of this nation's foremost venues.
- Greatly involved in the introduction of numerous interclub and in house squash and racquetball competitions/events throughout the 70's and 80's.
- Produced the world's first aluminium shaft squash racquet
- Heavily involved in the Victorian Squash Court Owners Association as its President and Board Member for 11 years.
- A key player in the establishment and inaugural Chairman of Squash Time Leisure Centres Pty. Ltd (which was the unification of 30 squash venues and 35 squash clubs), and was the forerunner to the establishment of the Victorian Squash Federation.
- Invented the game of Wavolleyball, a specifically designed game of volleyball for a squash court, which attracted new markets to our squash venues, involving social, in house and interclub competitions.
- Invented the game of Rebound Netball, a specifically designed game of netball for a squash court, which also attracted new markets to our squash venues, particularly females 20-40 years.
- Heavily involved in the establishment, development and promotion of Racquetball in this country.
- Heavily involved with the establishment of the Victorian Squash Federation and an inaugural board member.
- For 12 years a Board member of the Victorian Racquetball Association/Federation.
- Waverley, along with Doncaster and Ferntree Gully, was one of the first 3 venues to embrace racquetball.