

Sports...

Tennis Star Leslie Allen Makes History

For most people, things happen in "threes." For Leslie Allen, who ranks as the number one black woman tennis player in the world, the number should be "23."

The 23-year-old Ms. Allen wrote a page in tennis history recently by becoming the first black woman in 23 years to win a major tournament when she captured the \$125,000 Avon Championships of Detroit. In the past several weeks, Leslie has seen her world ranking climb 23 positions to where she now stands at number 26.

Allen, who graduated magna cum laude from the University of Southern California in 1977, is overly conscious of the significant role she plays as a black woman tennis pro. "I want to make a name for myself as a person, as a woman, and as a black," says Allen. "I'm aware enough to realize I represent all women in tennis, and all black players, too. Whether I want them or not, I've got responsibilities to the general public and to the black public."

Currently a New York City resident, Leslie's exposure to tennis began at an early age through a spark that was

ignited by her mother, New York actress Sarah Allen. Leslie can still vividly remember watching her mother, who was an amateur ranked in the Middle Atlantic region, compete during the summer months.

Tennis, however, did not become a career consideration for Leslie until her sophomore year in college. After attending four universities and majoring in journalism and costume design, the vivacious Allen finally decided on student life at USC. In 1975, with much thought and careful consideration, Leslie chose to work for a degree in speech communication, a focus which did not interfere with her involvement with the school's intercollegiate tennis team.

"Being a tennis professional is not only an end in itself, but also provides a means of creating other opportunities," notes Allen. "and, too, it gives me a chance to put something back into the game."

In that vein, Leslie and Avon have developed a program which is attempting to reach the black and minority communities to inform them of available opportunities in tennis and other areas. With the aid of Avon's involvement, Ms. Allen hopes to provide an impetus for youngsters to achieve both athletic and business success.



Allen credits Robert Ryland, her long-time coach and family friend, with nurturing the abilities that make her the talented tennis player she is today. Although Ryland remains Leslie's coach on record, the gifted right-hander has also trained with former U.S. Open and Wimbledon champ Althea Gibson, as well as with Ed Friedman and other teaching pros. In the fifties, Gibson became the first black female tennis player to reach the top of the international tennis circuit.

Expounding energy and clever tactics, Allen has successfully worked her way up the ladder on the Avon Championship circuit. She ended 1980 on a high note by blasting her way into the semifinals of a Tokyo tour-

namment with a straight-set quarterfinal victory over U.S. Open runner-up Hana Mandlikova. She also reached the second round of the 1980 U.S. Open, where she lost to Martina Navratilova in a hard-fought, three-set battle.

Davis named to NFL Hall of Fame



Willie Davis

One of the defensive standouts of Vince Lombardi's championship Green Bay Packer teams of the 1960s, Willie Davis, has recently been named to the National Football League Hall of Fame. Davis is a member of Jos. Schlitz Brewing Company's board of directors and owns a Schlitz wholesalership in Los Angeles. Davis's career highlights include playing in six championship games (winning five of them), the first two Super Bowl games (winning both) and five Pro Bowl games.