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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Raleigh News & Observer reporter, A.J. Carr, superstar collegiate standout, Stacey Schefflin Slomka and long-time tennis coach, Robbie Smith to enter the NC Tennis Hall of Fame.

If you have ever been interviewed by A.J. Carr, you know he makes you feel as though you are old friends discussing a favorite topic. He asks the most intriguing questions that allow the interviewee to stay as relaxed as possible. At the same time, A.J. gets to the heart of the matter and reports what is important to the reader. He is a real pro and tennis in North Carolina has benefited greatly from his gifts.

A.J. played and starred in baseball, basketball, and football in his small hometown of Wallace. In those days there was virtually no tennis in his town. He graduated from Guilford College with a major in physical education and a minor in English. He took a job as a cub reporter with the Greensboro Daily News sports department in 1961.

When A.J. began his journalism career, he knew sports in general but not tennis. In those days Greensboro was the hub of tennis activity in North Carolina, and the top tournaments in the state were held there. A.J. was assigned to cover tennis on the local scene, and these local tournaments provided a great training ground for A.J. This was also during the period when tennis on a worldwide basis was at the forefront of the sports "buzz." In 1966 A.J. was hired to move to Raleigh to work for the News and Observer and was there for 42 years until his retirement in 2009.

A.J. soon fell in love with tennis, both as a reporter and as a player. He immersed himself in the sport because, as an athlete himself, he loved its athleticism and competitive passion. Many tennis players in North Carolina have scrapbooks of old newspaper clippings. It is likely that many of the clippings have the A.J. Carr byline. A.J.'s tennis articles display a style of writing that is distinctively optimistic and positive. He was quick to praise and rarely criticized. He also injected humor.

Carr is in the NC Sports Hall of Fame, the Guilford College Sports Hall of Fame and the George Whitfield Hall of Fame. He was named the NC Sportswriter of the Year twice in 1978 and 2008. He was given the NC Tennis Foundation's Grady Elmore Media Award and has received numerous other honors and accolades.

Charlotte native Stacey Schefflin Slomka left North Carolina to forge an All-American collegiate career at the University of Georgia from 1987 until 1990. Her Georgia Bulldog teams finished 2nd in 1987 and never lower than 7th the rest of her career which included two NCAA Quarterfinalist appearances and one NCAA Semifinalist finish.

Individually, she was a 5 time All-American with those coming in both singles and doubles. She was the 1990 ITA Regional and National Senior-of-the Year. Stacey was also selected both athletically and academically to All-SEC teams in 1989 and 1990.

At the time of her graduation she was ranked second in school history with 133 singles wins and second in doubles with 86 victories. As of 2020, she is still tied for 2nd in career singles wins.

After college, Schefflin Slomka competed on the WTA tour for 3 years. Her highest ranking was 165 in singles and 242 in doubles. Her pro highlight was reaching the round of 32 at the Australian Open in 1991.

It is said about Robbie Smith, “Everywhere Robbie has moved he has made a lasting imprint because of his love of people and the game of tennis.” Player, teacher, club owner and coach, Robbie Smith has had a major impact on the lives of people and the game of tennis.

As a player, he has many wins over players who have Hall of Fame careers in their own right such as Keith Richardson, Tim Wilkison, Buster Brown, Gene Hamilton, Andy Andrews and others. Robbie Smith as always been the consummate tennis professional in all aspects of teaching, coaching, club development and competing. He has always given his best.

Robbie has developed clubs and facilities in multiple states. In North Carolina, he was instrumental in an Asheville hub at the Great Smokies Hilton, Sugar Mountain, and teaming with North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame member Tim Wilkison at the Jeff Adams Tennis Center in Charlotte, a public facility. In the early 1990’s he ventured to North Charlotte to create, develop and build the Charlotte Racquet Club North (CRCN). CRCN opened up the world of tennis to many people that had never played or were coming back to the game. His programming, league involvement for both adults and juniors, and tournaments brought a whole new group of people to our sport. He continued creating clubs in the North Charlotte-Lake Norman area that remain very successful today!

Smith has left a lasting impact on the people whom he taught and on the sport in North Carolina. He’s a true professional that through innovation and creativity has made a career of introducing the sport of tennis to enhance the lives of others.

The North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame now includes 105 members with the addition of A.J. Carr, Stacey Schefflin Slomka and Robbie Smith for the class of 2021. The inaugural class was inducted in 1975. The North Carolina Tennis Foundation selects two or three members each year to add to the Hall of Fame during Tennis Weekend. Currently, this class will be inducted on Saturday January 23, 2021 at the Pinehurst Resort and Country Club. The event may need to be postponed due to COVID-19. For up to date information, visit www.nctennisfoundation.com.

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About the North Carolina Tennis Foundation

The North Carolina Tennis Foundation was organized in 1961 for the purpose of promoting tennis and serves tennis players in North Carolina with its sister organization, the North Carolina Tennis Association. The Foundation provides financial support to many worthwhile tennis programs across the state. These programs include the National Junior Tennis & Learning (NJTL) Network, the NC State High School Championships, Adaptive Tennis, and numerous grants. The NCTF is also responsible for maintaining the [North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame](#).