



USTA NORTH CAROLINA

# KELLY GAINES RECEIVES ORDER OF THE LONG LEAF PINE

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Kelly Gaines honored.

Kelly Key Gaines was recognized as a recipient of The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the state's highest honor.

Gaines currently serves as Executive Director of the United States Tennis Association (USTA) North Carolina, a position she has held since 1995. Prior to her time at USTA North Carolina, she served as the Head Women's Tennis Coach at North Carolina State University. She has dedicated her career to teaching tennis at various clubs and camps across the state while serving on many community boards.

She was presented with The Order of the Long Leaf Pine by Donna Gast at North Carolina's Tennis Weekend in January.

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Gast is the former USTA North Carolina President and current North Carolina Tennis Foundation President.

"It is awarded to people who have made a contribution to people in our state," Gast said. "We gathered people who have known Kelly throughout her career and recommended her for the honor. She has continually given back throughout her life and it was really important to recognize her."

The Order of the Long Leaf Pine celebrates "persons who have made significant contributions to the state and their communities through their exemplary service and exceptional accomplishments," according to The Order of the Long Leaf Pine Society's website.

Originally from Burlington, NC, Gaines played junior tennis and attended Peace College on an athletic scholarship. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Her father, the late Francis Scott Key, is also a recipient of The Order of the Long Leaf Pine. Key was recognized for bringing jobs to Alamance County through his work at the General Electric plant in Mebane, NC. His framed award now hangs directly beside his daughter's award at her home.

"There is a power of tennis in North Carolina and it is so important to our state," Gaines said. "This is more honoring than any words."