

## **THE WALTHER CUP - A SHORT HISTORY**

Updated May 2021

The Walther Cup is an annual friendly competition between the Summit Tennis Association and the New Providence Tennis Association. It was first organized in 2013, and honors Dick Walther, who was a co-founder of both tennis groups. Dick passed away in May 2021 at the age of 98 years young. He is survived by his two daughters, their husbands, and five grandchildren.

Dick was born in 1922 and raised in Macedonia, Ohio. He studied engineering at Ohio State, and served during World War II in Oak Ridge TN as part of the Manhattan Project's "Adam" bomb engineering team. He worked for many years at Union Carbide Corp in New Jersey, Texas, and Puerto Rico as well as in Antwerp, Belgium. He and his wife Helen raised their 2 daughters, Beth and Joy, in New Providence. Dick and Helen had been married for 60 years when she died in 2018.

Dick began playing tennis at approx. age 25 and was an enthusiastic amateur player, coach, and mentor to adults and kids alike. He coached the junior high school girls at Kent Place School in Summit for a decade. He also worked with disabled and mentally challenged children. His passion was to encourage everyone to be physically active for a lifetime, just as he has been.

He is in the USTA Hall of Fame, was named USTA Coach of the Year, and was featured in US Tennis Magazine "Heroes" issue.

He started playing pickle ball at age 89 with the encouragement of his wife, who knew he would like it once he gave it a try. At age 95 he developed a new love for ping pong, and played with a competitive spirit several times a day. As usual, he mentored those he played with, including 5 year olds who stood on chairs so they could reach the table.

Not only did he help found both of our local tennis groups (open to players at all levels, with programs on the towns' public courts), but he also created the format for the popular Tennis Reacquainted programs for adults. Thanks to this program and other innovative activities, the USTA Eastern Section named the Summit Tennis Assoc. "Community Tennis Association of the Year" in 2005.

By Jill Harris, with thanks to Joy Walther Gardner, Beth Walther Herdman, and others