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## **Tennis Industry Magazine Names 2017 “Champions of Tennis”**

*Industry veteran Ajay Pant, the national tennis director for Life Time, receives “Person of the Year” honors, while individuals and organizations are recognized in 23 additional categories.*

NEW YORK, NY (Dec. 18, 2017) — Ajay Pant, the national tennis director for Life Time, has been named “Person of the Year” for 2017 by *Tennis Industry* magazine in the publication’s January 2018 issue. Pant led off the magazine’s 17th annual “Champions of Tennis” awards, which honors people, businesses and organizations dedicated to improving the sport and business of tennis.

Pant, who is based at Life Time’s headquarters in Chanhassen, Minn., joined the company in March and oversees the tennis and racquet sports business. Currently, of Life Time’s 129 locations, 26 offer tennis, but that number is expected to increase in 2018. The company is the largest operator of indoor tennis facilities in the U.S.

Pant’s history and influence in the sport runs deep. He is one of only 10 tennis teaching professionals in the world designated as a Master Professional by the two main teaching organizations, the Professional Tennis Registry and the U.S. Professional Tennis Association. A sought-after industry presenter, he also is a longtime volunteer with the U.S. Tennis Association and has been instrumental in key developments for bringing more youngsters into tennis.

“Ajay is a shining example of someone who has helped to make a difference in this industry, where he’s been a voice of reason, focusing on matters that truly help to grow this sport,” says Peter Francesconi, the editor of *Tennis Industry*, the world’s largest tennis trade magazine ([www.tennisindustrymag.com](http://www.tennisindustrymag.com)). “For decades, his knowledge, experience and steady guidance have helped influence the direction of this sport.”

Adds Tennis Industry Association Executive Director Jolyn de Boer, “Ajay has an unrelenting focus on excellence and achievement. We’re fortunate to have someone of his caliber and integrity in this industry.”

“I feel incredibly lucky,” Pant says. “My whole career has been spent with people who have made a difference: Arthur Ashe, Nick Bollettieri, Alan Schwartz, the Junior Tennis Champions Center—and now here at Life Time. I think we can move the needle—we *will* grow this game in the U.S.”

— more —

In addition to its Person of the Year, *Tennis Industry* also named winners in 23 other categories for its 2017 Champions of Tennis Awards (visit [www.tennisindustrymag.com](http://www.tennisindustrymag.com) for more on these winners):

- \* Tennis Industry Service Award: Michele Krause, Sarasota, Fla.
- \* Private/Commercial Facility of the Year: Five Star Tennis, Plainfield, Ill.
- \* Tennis Sales Representative of the Year: Stan Oley, Viera, Fla.
- \* Pro/Specialty Retailer of the Year: Sturtevant's, Bellevue, Wash.
- \* **Builder/Contractor of the Year: Competition Athletic Surfaces Inc., Chattanooga, Tenn.**
- \* Grassroots Tennis Champion of the Year: Delaine Mast, Lancaster, Pa.
- \* **Municipal Tennis Facility of the Year: Cooper Creek Tennis Center, Columbus, Ga.**
- \* Stringer of the Year: Ray Wendeln, Sun City Ariz.
- \* Community Tennis Association of the Year: Advantage Kids, Gilmanton, N.H.
- \* **Tennis Advocate of the Year: Jane Gamble, Paducah, Ky.**
- \* Wheelchair Tennis Champions of the Year: Annette & Jim Buck, Los Angeles, Calif.
- \* Junior Tennis Champion of the Year: Rita Gladstone, Orlando, Fla.
- \* Public Park of the Year: Patsy T. Mink Central Oahu Regional Park, Hawaii
- \* Park & Rec Agency of the Year: City of Irvine, Calif.
- \* High School Coach of the Year: Art Quinn, Greenwich Village, Colo.
- \* **National Junior Tennis & Learning (NJTL) Organization of the Year: A's & Aces, New Orleans, La.**
- \* Innovative Tennis Event of the Year: Tennis Owners & Managers (TOM) Conference
- \* Youth Tennis Provider of the Year: Mark Platt, St. Louis, Mo.
- \* Adult Tennis Provider of the Year: Social Nets, Northern California
- \* Public Tennis Facility of the Year, USTA National Campus, Orlando, Fla.
- \* U.S. Tennis Association (USTA) Section of the Year: USTA Northern
- \* Professional Tennis Registry (PTR) Member of the Year: Larry Hagness, Springfield, Mo.
- \* U.S. Professional Tennis Association (USPTA) Member of the Year: Fernando Velasco, Austin Texas

*Tennis Industry* has been covering the tennis business and the sport for 46 years. Available in both print and digital editions, TI is the official publication of the Tennis Industry Association, U.S. Racquet Stringers Association, and American Sports Builders Association. Visit [www.tennisindustrymag.com](http://www.tennisindustrymag.com).