



Richard C. Sorlien

January 7, 2008

Richard C. Sorlien, attorney and tennis competitor

Richard C. Sorlien, 85, a respected attorney and competitive tennis player, died on Monday Jan 7, 2008.

A graduate of Harvard (A.B. 1947) and Harvard Law (LL.B. 1949), Mr. Sorlien practiced for 46 years at Pepper Hamilton & Scheetz in Center City, specializing in tax and commercial law. Among his numerous clients were the late Mr. J. Howard Pew and the Sun Company. He served on numerous boards including 22 years with The Glenmede Trust Company.

Mr. Sorlien also enjoyed a lifetime of amateur tennis competition. His love of tennis began at age seven on a makeshift grass court at his childhood home in St. Cloud, Minnesota, and he continued to play into his eighties.

He was always eager to "hit some," his family reports. "The only time he considered it too cold to play was when the balls wouldn't bounce," said his son Eric.

Mr. Sorlien first appeared in a national competition as a high school

senior in the 1940 Interscholastics, held at the Merion Cricket Club. He later won the New England Intercollegiate Tennis Championship doubles title, and the Air Force Pacific Singles Championships in Manila, Philippines before returning home from his three and a half year military service in World War II. In 1948, Mr. Sorlien's debut in a major men's tournament, the Newport (RI) Casino Invitational, was short-lived as he was quickly defeated in the first round by Pancho Gonzales.

During the next twenty years, Mr. Sorlien competed regularly in most of the major grass court events, including twelve years of play at the US Nationals in Forest Hills, NY. He also competed at Wimbledon in 1952 and later was a three-time finalist in the Wimbledon Veterans' Doubles (age 45 category). Later he won ten US national titles in the various senior age divisions as well as the 60s Singles ITF World Championships in Australia (in 1982). He captained numerous US teams in international competitions equivalent to the Davis Cup for senior age groups.

Mr. Sorlien was active in the administration and promotion of tennis on the local and national levels, serving as President of the Philadelphia and Suburban Lawn Tennis Association and the Middle States Lawn Tennis Association. He co-founded Philadelphia's Gold Cup Junior Talent Program and helped launch the Philadelphia Tennis Center in West Mount Airy. He also served as a member of the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Committee of Management and devoted more than forty years of volunteer service to the organization.

For the past several years, Mr. Sorlien served on the Board of Directors of the International Lawn Tennis Club of the United States. The International Club (IC) is a non-profit organization of 35

nations, promoting fellowship, understanding, and competitive play among its members. The Sorlien Cup, named in his honor, is an annual open-age competition between the ICs of Canada and the US.

In 1996, Mr. Sorlien was inducted into the Middle States Tennis Hall of Fame.

Mr. Sorlien was a member of the Merion Cricket Club in Haverford for 57 years, including a term on the Board of Governors. He had also served as President of the Harvard Club of Philadelphia.

When he was not at home in suburban Philadelphia or traveling internationally for tennis events, Mr. Sorlien spent time on his timber and mining property in Northern California. Following a forest fire in 1959, he replanted trees over the course of twenty years, including some 3000 Sequoia Gigantea (Sierra Redwood) seedlings. These now stand over 100 feet high and over five feet in diameter.

To the surprise of no one who knew him, Mr. Sorlien cleared a level spot near the redwood grove for a tennis court. "He didn't quite get to finish it," said his daughter Sandy. "It was just dirt, but that didn't stop him from stringing a clothesline between two net posts and hitting a few balls."

Mr. Sorlien is survived by his wife, Rebecca S. Drury, his four children, Sandy, Christopher and Eric Sorlien and Charlotte McLaughlin, two grandchildren and one sister, Katherine Holman of Malvern. He was predeceased by two brothers, Kenneth E. and Robert Parker Sorlien.

Friends and relatives are invited to his Memorial Service on Monday January

14, 2 PM in the Sanctuary of Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church at 625
Montgomery Avenue, Bryn Mawr.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to The Sorlien Cup, c/o
International Lawn Tennis Club
of the United States, 702 Heatherhill Road, Bethesda, MD 20817.

Previous Events

Service

JAN 14. 2:00 PM (ET)

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
625 Montgomery Avenue
Bryn Mawr, PA