



Special to the Reading Eagle: Tom Boland | United States Tennis Association President Katrina Adams speaks during a fundraising dinner for Reading's COR Tennis program at the Abraham Lincoln hotel Thursday.

USTA President Katrina M. Adams holds court in Reading

Friday September 18, 2015 12:01 AM

By [Andrew Wagaman](#)

The woman who just finished running the U.S. Open should have been en route to Uzbekistan on Thursday night.

Instead, United States Tennis Association President Katrina M. Adams came to Reading. "You are what we are all about at the USTA," she said at a fundraiser for the city's COR Tennis program. "This is a greater use of my time than being on the other side of the world."

COR Tennis, a year-round program run out of Hampden Park by the Reading Recreation Commission, has been practicing the kind of community outreach that Adams believes can revitalize the game of tennis.

Adams, 47, grew up in Chicago's West Side in a family that knew nothing about the sport but encouraged her ambitions.

She reached No. 8 in the world in doubles and No. 67 in singles before serving as the executive director of the Harlem Junior Tennis and Education Program for the past decade.

Adams took over as USTA president earlier this year, becoming the first African-American and former professional to hold the top position, a two-year unpaid term.

One of her first moves was to create a Hispanic engagement advisory group. The growing demographic population is severely underrepresented in the U.S. tennis community, Adams said Thursday, so her top priority is one of outreach and inclusion.

"Until now, the USTA has shown a distinct lack of effort and interest," she said. "We need to challenge and reinvigorate traditional approaches to outreach."

Adams applauded COR Tennis for coaching kids off the court as well as on it. COR offers before and afterschool programs, summer programs, assistance to physical education classes and more. Fromuth Tennis and the Berks County Community Foundation help fund the program.

"We want to give more young people the opportunity to ... use tennis as a vehicle to chase life goals," she said. "Clearly this is an aim you share as well, which is why it's so very important we support COR and programs like it."

As USTA president, Adams is also overseeing the building of a new \$60 million tennis facility in Florida and renovation project of the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York.

Though the spotlight is on the USTA during the two weeks of the U.S. Open, Adams said her legacy will "be more accurately defined about what happens away from the lights."

"All of us realize it's a critical time for the sport, and because of that we have to embrace the challenges that will allow us to grow and thrive," she said. "We owe it to the sport, young people and ourselves."

Past COR Tennis players like Cassandra Noray and Angel Negrón recognized Adams' story. Even though no one in Noray's family played, she got involved in COR Tennis in fifth grade. It helped pay for more advanced lessons.

"Tennis showed (Adams) she could do a lot in life," said Noray, now a sophomore student-athlete at Alvernia University. "It's right to give back and help others."

Negrón, a Penn State Berks student and Reading High graduate who also continues to volunteer for COR, said Adams understands how inclusion fosters additional efforts to improve the community.

"Even though her term is only two years, she's setting a great example for the leaders who follow her," he said.

Contact Andrew Wagaman: 610-371-5095 or awagaman@readingeagle.com.



Special to the Reading Eagle: Tom Boland | Reading High Coach Russ Moore, USTA President Katrina Adams and COR Co-Executive Director Larry Zerbe during a fundraising dinner for Reading's COR Tennis program at the Abraham Lincoln hotel Thursday.



Special to the Reading Eagle: Tom Boland | Mara Trifoi, COR Tennis Mission award winner, COR Co-Executive Director Larry Zerbe, Cassandra Noray, the COR Tennis Collegiate Player award winner, and USTA President Katrina Adams. They gathered for a fundraising dinner for Reading's COR Tennis program at the Abraham Lincoln hotel Thursday. Adams was the featured speaker.



Special to the Reading Eagle: Tom Boland | USTA President Katrina Adams (center, in the black jacket and blue dress) meets with tennis players and volunteers from City of Reading Tennis during a fundraising dinner for Reading's COR Tennis program at the Abraham Lincoln hotel Thursday.