

Iowa couple's great love for tennis is ageless

The game never gets old, but some days Glen Linde wonders if he might be getting too old for tennis. Then he spends some time around the courts in Waterloo, Iowa, and the passion to play is renewed – and irresistible.

He really can't let go of the game, for tennis has got a hold on him.

A hold on him *and* his wife Dorothy. They've been married nearly six decades, and all these years, each has carried on a love affair – with tennis.

"We're *not* old here!" declared Glen at Waterloo's Brynes Park Tennis Center, where he and Dorothy were watching "one of the youngsters," their 52-year-old daughter Mary Linde, compete in the USTA/Missouri Valley Mixed Doubles Sectional Aug. 26-28.

Glen and Dorothy are a youthful older couple, thanks to tennis. They celebrated their 57th anniversary Sept. 11.

"We are mature," acknowledged Dorothy, unable to fight off a smile, "but we haven't grown up yet."

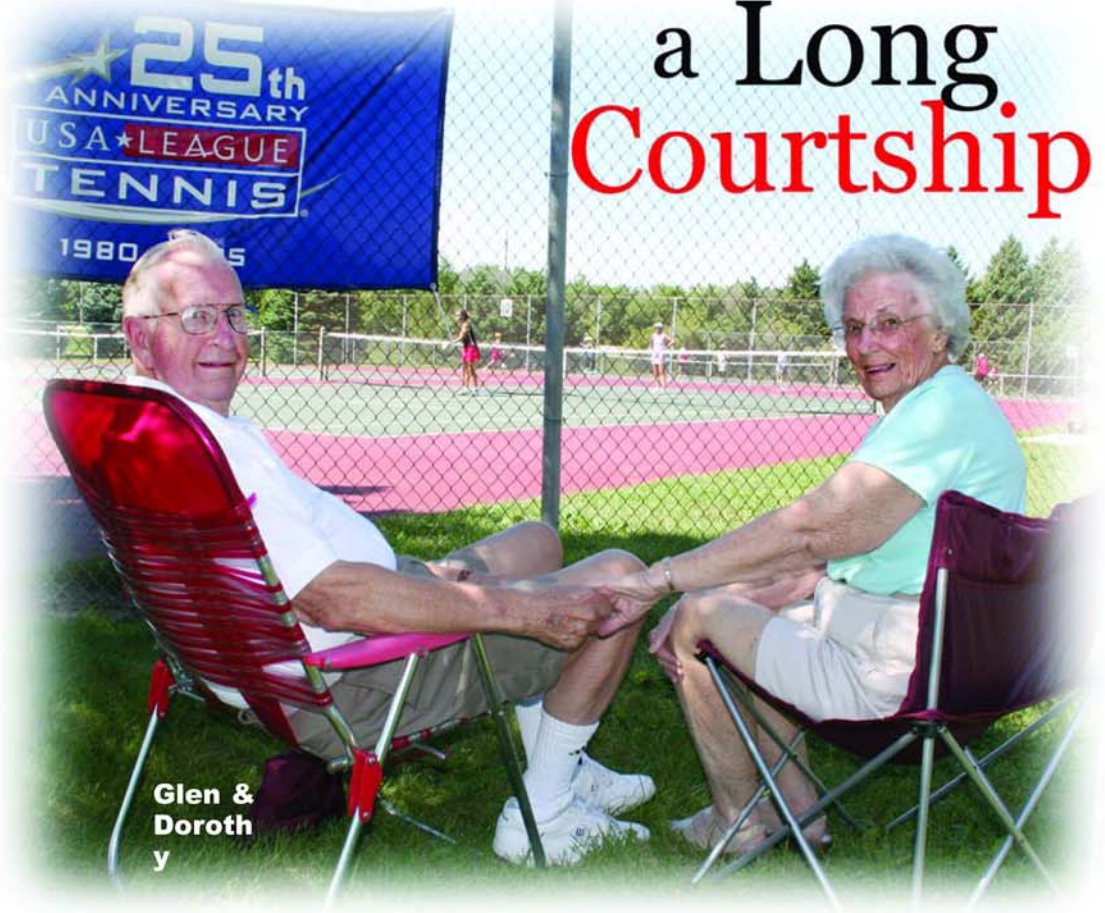
Both are enjoying excellent health well into their 80s, thanks to tennis.

"Each year I think I'm going to have to quit playing, but I keep going," Glen said. "We both play two or three times a week. No problem."

Dorothy couldn't resist delivering a zinger at her husband's expense, saying, "He's still got good hand-eye coordination. He still runs hard, just too long in one spot."

They're local legends, thanks to tennis. The Lindes have remained stellar players well into their senior years. They've also mentored generations of high school players from the Cedar Falls and Waterloo area, including multiple state champions.

"For a lot of years, Glen was still able to beat or at least take sets off those kids



Glen & Dorothy
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a Long Courtship

who went on to state titles," noted a longtime friend of the couple, Ron Brainard.

"Now those kids have kids," said Glen, a retired firefighter. "Dorothy and I got back a lot more than we gave."

A LOVE MATCH Dorothy and Glen met, thanks to tennis. She had been his brother's mixed doubles partner.

"We swept the city championships in '48 – singles, doubles, mixed," recalled Glen. "Then we didn't touch our rac-

quets for 18 years. We got married and had kids."

But one day, when their kids had gotten older, Glen's brother needed a fourth for a doubles match.

"Glen dug his racket out, someplace in the attic, I think," Dorothy, a retired secretary, said. "We've been playing ever since."

Playing *and* winning.

FROM THE START As seniors and now super seniors, Dorothy and Glen have been competing in USA League Tennis since the leagues were first formed 25 years ago.

"We go back to the days when Michelob was the sponsor," said Dorothy.

She and Glen have each advanced to Nationals multiple times, with Dorothy's team coming within two points of second place in 1999. Glen, meanwhile, now contemplates retiring from the game less and less, when he can "still snap the serve in" and look forward to possibly more wins playing 85-and-over doubles in 2006.

"That competitive spirit... Mom and Dad have both got it bad," said Mary Linde, who plays for a USA League team based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. "You don't want to be around them when they've lost. Up until about eight years ago, I couldn't get a set off Mom."

Many tennis players from Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Cedar Rapids marvel at how competitive the Lindes have remained for so many years.

"I'd watch Glen play and think, 'Geez, I wish I could play like that,'" said Brainard, 60. "That was 30 years ago, and today he's still got the strokes. He doesn't get to the ball quite as fast, but if he does get to the ball, it's coming back where *you* won't be able to get to

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That competitive spirit... Mom and Dad have both got it bad.

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it.”

Back to Dorothy...

Deb Streff of Cedar Rapids remembers playing her first seniors match a few years ago. She and her partner, both the minimum age for seniors, figured they had youth on their side.

“We were playing these two little old ladies we guessed had to be 75, 76,” Streff said. “We had to be 25 years younger than them, and we’re thinking, ‘Now they’re old.’ One of them was Dorothy; we couldn’t touch her. They beat us in straight sets”

HALL OF FAME The Lindes may have only now reached the pentacle of their tennis careers, earning induction this year into the USTA/Iowa District Hall of Fame. Glen had served up his wife’s name for nomination, but it was only fitting they be honored together.

“I was tired of her getting overlooked,” said Glen, who earn the \$1.98 for his first racquet “mowing lawns all of one summer.” During the Great Depression, Glen found solace in tennis as a priest taught him how to play the game.

The always gregarious Glen, one never shy about sharing his opinions – especially how much he detests the now common “screeching” in professional tennis – was rendered speechless when he and Dorothy entered Iowa’s

Hall of Fame.

“Dad got all choked, and all of us kids started chuckling. We’d never seen him not have something to say,” Mary Linde said. “Mom had to do all the talking, and she looked at Dad and really got in a good one: ‘Finally, after more than 50 years of marriage, I finally agree with everything he said.’”

Just like on a tennis court, Dorothy saw an opening and went for the winner.



25 YEARS OF... Follow-throughs, volleys, forehands, backhands and shaking hands at the net. friendly rivalries, enjoying team camaraderie and getting to know each during changeovers.

GO TO THE NET

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Since getting married, how many times have Dorothy and Glen Linde played mixed doubles together?

Visit the Web to learn about marital bliss and mixed doubles.

Celebrating 25 years of USA League Tennis on the net at miss

If you haven't been visiting the Missouri Valley Section Website this summer, then you've missed some fun features from our USA League Sectional championships. But it's not too late. Read all these articles in their entirety still posted on the Section site:

MARRIED COUPLES & MIXED DOUBLES

Discover how two couples do what many consider the impossible – be married and play mixed doubles together.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Meet a close Missouri family that's

formed a competitive 8.0 team known for tough play and unique tennis attire.

ROOKIE SUCCESS

Call them divas – the “Down the Line Divas,” whose first year of League tennis has included a Sectional championship.