

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ARTHUR ASHE STAMP DEDICATED AT US OPEN

NEW YORK – Humanitarian and world-class tennis player Arthur Ashe was immortalized on a postage stamp today when the U.S. Postal Service conducted a first-day-of-issue stamp dedication ceremony under the shadows of the stadium bearing his name. The ceremony took place as part of Arthur Ashe Kids' Day activities kicking off the 2005 US Open. The stamp will be available nationwide at Post Offices and Philatelic Centers, Aug. 28.

"As a native New Yorker, I'm thrilled that we could hold this dedication here in the city — and near the courts — where Arthur Ashe so often dominated the sport of tennis," said Henry Pankey, Vice President, Emergency Preparedness, U.S. Postal Service. "This is also the city where Arthur Ashe spoke out so eloquently on social issues — in the streets, in the halls of justice, and at the United Nations. So, it was important to us that the image we chose for this stamp captured the essence of Ashe as a man, as an athlete, and as a social activist."

The stamp image is a photo by Michael O'Neill that Sports Illustrated used on the cover when it named Ashe "1992 Sportsman of the Year." It is the first Sports Illustrated cover photo to be featured on a postage stamp.

Joining Pankey in dedicating the stamp were Ashe's wife, photographer Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe; their daughter, Camera; Chairman of the US Tennis Association, Franklin R. Johnson; and, Billie Jean King, International Tennis Hall of Famer and Founder of World TeamTennis.

"The entire family is very proud and excited to have Arthur featured on a postage stamp. It's a wonderful honor," said Moutoussamy-Ashe.

As the first African-American man to win Grand Slam tennis tournaments— Wimbledon, the United States and Australian Opens — Ashe followed his on-court accomplishments with a lifetime of activity devoted to endeavors overshadowed by his humanitarian endeavors.

"Arthur Ashe made countless contributions to the sport of tennis and instilled in children of all backgrounds the values of humanitarianism, leadership and academic excellence," said Johnson. "Arthur's legacy is truly immortalized by this special stamp."



Ashe's commitment to social issues led him to establish foundations that help disenfranchised youth, and support the fight against AIDS, which he had contracted from a blood transfusion during heart surgery. Ashe also organized efforts to oppose South Africa's apartheid rule, which ended in 1994. Before succumbing to AIDS-related pneumonia in 1993, Ashe spoke before the United Nations General Assembly and urged nations to increase their efforts and funding in the war against AIDS.

Born July 10, 1943, in segregated segregated Richmond, VA, Ashe learned to play tennis on blacks-only Brook Field playground under the tutelage of local black tennis great Ron Charity. Ashe eventually Recognizing his son's talent, Arthur Ashe, Sr. supported his training while raising Arthur and his brother John without their mother, who died in 1950.

Several years later, Ashe's father married Lorene Kimbrough, adding her two children, Robert and Loretta, to the Ashe family. Ashe's stable home and loving relationship with his stepmother impressed upon him the importance of family, education and spirituality, and instilled in him the discipline that enabled him to graduate from UCLA despite a grueling tennis schedule.

Though racial barriers excluded Ashe from tennis competitions in the South, his tenacity and enthusiasm for the sport never flagged. To compete against white players during high school, Ashe enrolled at Sumner High School in St. Louis to play tennis prior to attending UCLA.

Eventually Ashe played in the world's foremost tennis championships, acquiring a long list of wins, including those among them three Grand Slam tournaments. Ashe became the first African-American to represent the United States on the Davis Cup team, playing in 32 Davis Cup matches and winning 27 during his tennis career.

A heart attack and ongoing heart problems, however, forced him to retire from competition in 1980, but not from tennis. As the first African-American to captain the Davis Cup team, Ashe led the team to win the cup in 1981 and 1982.

Earning numerous honors throughout his life, Ashe was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1985, and hailed by Sports Illustrated as "Sportsman of the Year" in 1992. He died Feb. 6, 1993. Four years after his death, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) named the new 23,000-seat US Open tennis facility Arthur Ashe Stadium and Commemorative Garden at its opening ceremony in Flushing Meadow, New York City.

Presented by Amerada Hess and produced by the USTA, Arthur Ashe Kids' Day honors the tennis legend and continues his mission of using tennis as a means to instill in kids the values of humanitarianism, leadership and academic excellence.

Children of all ages were offered free activities and win prizes. This included a chance to volley with legendary tennis pros and compete in the Hess Express Obstacle Course with Jim Courier; NikeGO Tennis with John McEnroe, James Blake, Mario Ancic, Feliciano Lopez and Donald Young; Beat the Pro with Gustavo Kuerten; and the Barilla Challenge of Champions with Olympic gold medal skier Bode Miller.

Philatelic Products

There are four philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- First Day Cover (Single) \$0.75 (Item 457461)
- Digital Color Postmark Cover \$1.50 (Item 457465)
- Cultural Diary Page w/stamp \$12.95 (Item 457496)
- Cancellation Keepsake (Full Pane with Digital Color Postmark Cover) \$8.90 (Item 457499)

These products, as well as current U.S. stamps and stationery, are available online at www.usps.com, and by telephone at 800 STAMP-24, where customers can request a free catalog. To see the Arthur Ashe commemorative stamp and other images from the 2005 Commemorative Stamp Program, visit the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop and click on "Release Schedule" in the Collector's Corner. Beautifully framed prints of original stamp art for delivery straight to the home or office are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), for placement in a larger envelope addressed to:

ARTHUR ASHE COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS
POSTMASTER
41-65 MAIN ST
FLUSHING NY 11355-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by September 27, 2005.

How to Order First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly USA Philatelic catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

INFORMATION FULFILLMENT
DEPT 6270
US POSTAL SERVICE
PO BOX 219014
KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014

Since 1775, the Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 142 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of

mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

The USTA is the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the U.S. It owns and operates the US Open, the largest annually attended sporting event in the world and, in 2004, launched the US Open Series which links 10 summer tournaments to the US Open. In addition, it owns the 94 Pro Circuit events throughout the U.S., and selects the teams for the Davis Cup, Fed Cup, Olympic and Paralympic Games. A not-for-profit organization with more than 665,000 members, it invests 100% of its proceeds to promote and develop the growth of tennis, from the grassroots to the professional levels. For more information on the USTA, log on to usta.com.