

When I was seven, I had this dream. I wanted to be the number one tennis player in the world. I would watch my idol, Monica Seles, beat player after player and I would say to myself, "That can be me." She made it look so simple and fun. Needless to say, I patterned my game after her.

On my 8th birthday, I decided that I was going to follow this dream. I told my mom, and then decided to get to work. Shortly after making this decision, my mom and I met Coach Duey.

At the time, Coach Duey was in his early thirties. He had recently moved from the northeast. My mom heard he was coaching some players in the area and that he was excellent. My mom *also* knew that I was having problems hitting angles as well as shots down the line. Knowing these are two key shots in the game of tennis, she allowed me to take lessons from Coach Duey.

My mom's decision left a positive long term effect on my game. Coach Duey and I worked relentlessly on my down the line shots and angles. He would feed ball after ball. At first, I would miss most of my shots; however, through hard work, I became more consistent. Eventually, the angles I learned from Coach Duey became my *trademark*.

Coach Duey made a lasting impression on my tennis career; however, more importantly, he greatly impacted my life. Whenever I was on the court with Coach Duey, I was never allowed to give anything less than 100 percent. He always pushed me to reach my full potential. There are many memories, but there is one that stands out in my mind. I remember one lesson I had at 9 years old. Coach Duey fed a ball in the alley and I decided not to run after it. He stopped the drill to ask why I had not chased down the ball—I indicated that the ball was "out." He quickly let me know that my response was *incorrect*. "Chase every ball, including those that are out because you only get one chance to chase *that* ball." I immediately understood what he meant. There would be other shots to chase that would land in the same spot that I would have the opportunity to chase; however, I would never have the chance to chase *that* particular ball again. After he said this I felt awful. I felt like I had thrown away an opportunity. At nine years old, I remember thinking that I never wanted to feel like that again. From then on, I made sure to run down every ball—so I would not miss out on another future opportunity.

This particular lesson I learned at 9 years old transferred over into my life as well. I never wanted to miss out on any opportunities I was given. In school, if I needed to study an hour longer to earn two additional points, I would. If I needed to practice thirty minutes extra before a match to feel prepared, I would. After this lesson, I decided to always work the hardest on the court as well as in school. This particular lesson Coach Duey taught me resulted in offers from top colleges such as Harvard, The University of Georgia, The University of Southern California, Pepperdine, and many others. I decided to attend the University of Georgia. By doing so, I became the first African-American female to sign a letter of intent for their varsity women's tennis team. While in attendance, I played the top singles position and maintained academic honors.

Coach Duey's impact on my life has been priceless. The life lessons he taught through tennis have helped mold me into the person I am today. He has always been a positive influence on my life. It is difficult to find coaches that exemplify the qualities found in Coach Duey. He genuinely cares for all of his players. He gives 100 percent and asks for nothing less in return. I have been blessed to have him in my life. He is definitely a great coach, friend, mentor, and role model. I would recommend him to students at any level because I know he will leave a positive impact on whomever he teaches.

~ **Natalie Frazier**, Ranked in Top 10 nationally in every junior age group. Ranked #5 in NCAA's in 2007

