



ThanksUSA

Thanking America's Troops and Their Families with the Gift of Education

Q&A

with General Ann E. Dunwoody,
U.S. Army (Ret)



Q: You must be quite the tennis player, having played the sport in college.

We had tennis teams that competed against other colleges, but back then there were no scholarships or varsity letters for women who excelled in sports. That said, I with my incredible (SUNY) coach Silvia Stokes, never even thought about Title X for women. We felt like an all-star team and had a very winning record to support it. I was so happy to be part of a team with such fantastic friends and a coach who cared, that I wouldn't trade the experience for anything.

I learned a lot from winning as well as losing, and I learned a lot of life-long lessons that stayed with me throughout my military career and made me a better leader and person.

Q: Has tennis been a passion for your family?

I learned to play tennis from my mom and dad and brothers and sisters back in junior high school. An afternoon on the tennis courts was a family outing for us. Even after I was in the Army, every visit home involved a tennis match or two with Mom and Dad.

When I met my husband Craig, our first date was a tennis match, with the loser having to make dinner. I lost the match but Craig still made dinner [smiles]. We continued to play tennis, often motivated by my mom who played into her eighties. I know if there is tennis in heaven she is on the court right now.

When Ann Dunwoody retired in 2012 as the Armed Forces' first female four-star general, she could look back at a 38-year Army career and a profound legacy. Chief of Staff of the Army General Ray Odierno said then, "Ann is a leader who lived our Army values, who always led from the front... Her true legacy and reward will be the thousands of soldiers and civilians whose lives she has touched."

Today, Dunwoody continues to touch thousands, including the children and spouses of America's soldiers, by signing on to the United States Professional Tennis Association's (USPTA) Tennis Thanks the Troops campaign in support of ThanksUSA. Dunwoody is also busy with speeches, the recent release of a book, and playing tennis near her home in Tampa.



Q: What do tennis and your military career have in common?

Fitness and coaching. The military is a very demanding profession both physically and mentally, and so is tennis. You have to be in great shape and on your toes at all times in both professions. Like Ms. Silvia Stokes, I learned that as good players become more senior, they become good coaches who teach and share their experiences with the next generation. The Army is no different. It is the senior leadership of the Army's responsibility to coach the next generation waiting on the bench.

Q: You know military families well. How important to them are post-secondary school scholarships, like those from ThanksUSA?

I think that great performance and hard work should be rewarded, and that's exactly what these scholarships do.

Reinforcement of good performance inspires even better performance. Education and sports are both critical components in good leadership. They go hand in hand: Being mentally and physically fit, as well as having the education and the intellectual tools to prepare students for success in the real world.

Q: Why do you support ThanksUSA's Tennis Thanks the Troops and the USPTA?

I loved being a soldier, and I loved the Army; thus, I am so appreciative of campaigns like Tennis 'Thanks the Troops that reach out to our men and women who have served. I encourage every organization, business industry, and college where I speak, to reach out to welcome our troops home and make sure that their quality of life is equal to their quality of service.

-General Ann Dunwoody



Pictured left to right, ITA Executive Director, David A. Benjamin, International Tennis Hall of Fame President, Stan Smith, General Ann Dunwoody and General Dunwoody's husband, Craig Brotchie