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Six Chess Legends to be Inducted into the U.S. and World Chess Halls of Fame in Saint Louis

Induction Ceremony Will Kick-Off the 2019 U.S. and U.S. Women's Chess Championships

SAINT LOUIS (March 12, 2019) —Chess history will be made at an induction ceremony recognizing six exceptional contributors to the iconic game as the newest members of the U.S. and World Chess Halls of Fame, on March 18, 2019. The ceremony will serve as a kick-off to the 2019 U.S. and U.S. Women's Chess Championships—two elite, national tournaments featuring the strongest players in America—held at the Saint Louis Chess Club, which has hosted these tournaments for the past 10 years.

This year, the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame committee and the U.S. Chess Trust have selected Max Judd, Saint Louis resident, immigrant and top player at the turn of the 20th century; William Lombardy, Chess Olympiad gold medalist who was an instrumental collaborator in bringing four world championship titles to the United States; and Susan Polgar, Olympiad gold medalist, former women's world chess champion and Webster University collegiate chess coach, for induction into the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame.

"The 2019 inductees to the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame represent a culmination of exceptional skill, leadership and tireless promotion, and will continue to inspire the future generation of American chess," said U.S. Chess Trust Chairman Harold Winston.

Additionally, the World Chess Federation (*Fédération Internationale des Échecs* or FIDE) has nominated three new members for the World Chess Hall of Fame. Inductees include Xie Jun, Olympiad team gold medalist, chess author and first player from Asia to become women's world chess champion; Akiba (or Akiva) Rubinstein, Olympiad gold medalist and one of the strongest players of the early 20th century, who is best remembered for his contributions to opening theory and rook and pawn endgames; and Mark Taimanov, Olympiad team gold medalist, prolific chess writer and theoretician, and one of the few players to have defeated six world chess champions.

"The 2019 World Chess Hall of Fame inductees exemplify the global impact and inclusivity chess has to offer, and we're honored to include their contributions to the game's rich history," said FIDE Chief Operating Officer Willy Ickicki.

Inductees of both Halls of Fame are chosen for their impact on the sport and have included players, authors, journalists, scholars, organizers and supporters of the game. Each player will be commemorated at the World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF) in Saint Louis with a plaque bearing their image and biography. Notable games and highlights will also be featured in a new digital interactive gallery.

"The World Chess Hall of Fame in Saint Louis commends the 2019 inductees, and we look forward to celebrating their unique achievements at this year's induction ceremony," said Shannon Bailey, WCHOF's chief curator.

The Halls of Fame inductions and the opening ceremony of the U.S. Women's Chess Championships are open to the public and will take place at the Saint Louis Zoo on Monday, March 18, 2019, with a cocktail reception at 6:00 p.m. and program from 7:00-8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25 apiece. To attend, please email register@saintlouischessclub.org.

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About the 2019 U.S. Hall of Fame Inductees

William Lombardy
(1937-2017)

Born in New York City, William Lombardy helped bring four world championship titles to the United States. Lombardy placed first in the 1957 World Junior Chess Championship, winning all 11 games. Three years later, he led the U.S. team to first place in the World Student Team Chess Championship (1960), scoring 11 wins and two draws. Lombardy also played a critical role as one of Bobby Fischer's seconds in the 1972 World Chess Championship. He won three U.S. Open Chess Championships in 1963, 1965, and 1975 and played on seven U.S. Chess Olympiad teams between 1958 and 1978, including on the 1976 gold medal winning-team. Lombardy wrote nine chess books, including *Understanding Chess: My System, My Games, My Life* (2011).

Max Judd
(1851-1906)

Born Maximilian Judkiewich in present-day Poland, Max Judd and his family came to the United States in 1862, living in several states before settling in Saint Louis, Missouri, in 1873. In his adopted hometown, he made his mark as a promoter and player. One of the strongest American players between Paul Morphy and Harry Nelson Pillsbury, Judd's tournament successes included first place in the 1904 Western Chess Association Championship, second place in the 4th American Chess Congress of 1876, and second place in the 7th American Chess Congress of 1903. In match play, he defeated Albert Hodges (+5 -2 =2) in 1888, and two years later, he beat Jackson Showalter (+7 -3 =0).

Susan Polgar
(1969-)

Born in Budapest, Hungary, Susan Polgar immigrated to the United States in 1994. The top-ranked woman in the world at 15, in 1991, she became the first to earn the grandmaster title by norms and rating. Polgar won the Women's World Rapid and Blitz Championships in 1992. Her victory in the 1996 Women's World Championship also made her the first triple crown winner. Polgar won 12 Olympiad medals (five gold, four silver, three bronze) and led the U.S. to second place in 2004. She was undefeated in 56 games played on Board One. Polgar has coached men's college division I teams at Texas Tech University (2011-2012) and Webster University (2012-2018) to a record seven consecutive national championships.

About the 2019 World Chess Hall of Fame Inductees

Akiba (or Akiva) Rubinstein
(1882-1961)

Akiba Rubinstein, along with Paul Keres and Viktor Korchnoi, is considered one of the strongest players never to become world champion, despite learning the game at the late age of 16. Born in what is today eastern Poland, he was one of the four strongest players in the world from 1907 to 1922, and for a short time in 1912, might have been number one. That year Rubinstein won four major events (San Sebastian, Vilnius, Breslau, and Piastany) and a match for the World Chess Championship with Emanuel Lasker seemed inevitable, but fate and World War I decided otherwise. Rubinstein is still remembered today for his contributions to opening theory and rook and pawn endgames.

Mark Taimanov
(1926-2016)

Mark Taimanov was ranked among the top 20 players in the world for over a quarter of a century and is one of the few players to have defeated six world chess champions (Botvinnik, Smyslov, Tal, Petrosian, Spassky, and Karpov). He played in 23 Soviet Chess Championships, a record equaled only by Efim Geller, tying for first in 1952 and 1956. Twice a candidate for the World Chess Championship (1953 and 1971), Taimanov was also a member of the gold medal-winning 1956 Soviet Olympiad team. A prolific and well-respected writer on the game, he was an excellent theoretician best known for the variation of the Sicilian which bears his name (1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nc6).

Xie Jun
(1970-)

A trailblazer and national hero in China, Xie Jun was the first player from Asia to become women's world chess champion (1991-1996 and 1999-2001), ending a 41-year Soviet stranglehold on the title. As a four-time women's world chess champion, she is the very first player to win the individual title under both the classical system and the knock-out system. Xie Jun represented China in eight Women's Chess Olympiads, winning seven team medals (three gold, one silver, three bronze) and five individual medals (two silver and three bronze). She is the author of *Chess Champion from China: The Life and Games of Xie Jun* (1998), one of the first game collections on a female player.

About the Chess Halls of Fame

The World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF) celebrates the accomplishments of the game's greatest players from the United States and across the globe. The institution houses both the U.S. and World Chess Halls of Fame, which as of March 2019 counted 62 and 36 members, respectively. New inductees are honored in an annual ceremony, which has been held in Saint Louis since 2011. Since 2012, the inductions have been held during the opening ceremonies for the annual U.S. and U.S. Women's Chess Championships.

How the Induction Candidates Are Chosen

Representatives of the World Chess Federation (*Fédération Internationale des Échecs*, or FIDE) nominate and select new candidates for induction into the World Chess Hall of Fame. Members of the World Chess Hall of Fame are chosen for their total contribution to the sport. Players as well as others who have made an impact as authors, journalists, organizers, and in other ways are eligible for induction.

The U.S. Chess Federation Hall of Fame Committee considers candidates for the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame and sends its nominations to the U.S. Chess Trust each year. The trustees of the U.S. Chess Trust vote on who should be inducted. The induction itself takes place either at the U.S. Chess Federation Awards Luncheon during the U.S. Open or at the World Chess Hall of Fame. Induction are almost always performed by either the Chairman of the U.S. Chess Trust or the Chairman of the Hall of Fame Committee.

About the World Chess Hall of Fame

The World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to building awareness of the cultural and artistic significance of chess. It opened on September 9, 2011, in the Central West End after moving from previous locations in New York; Washington, D.C.; and Florida. The WCHOF is located at 4652 Maryland Avenue, housed in an historic 15,900 square-foot residence-turned-business, featuring World Chess Hall of Fame inductees, United States Chess Hall of Fame inductees selected by the U.S. Chess Trust, displays of artifacts from the permanent collection and exhibitions highlighting the great players, historic games and rich cultural history of chess. The WCHOF partners with the Saint Louis Chess Club to provide innovative programming and outreach to local, national and international audiences.

About the Saint Louis Chess Club

The Saint Louis Chess Club is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization that is committed to making chess an important part of our community. In addition to providing a forum for the community to play tournaments and casual games, the Club also offers chess improvement classes, beginner lessons and special lectures.

Recognizing the cognitive and behavioral benefits of chess, the Saint Louis Chess Club is committed to supporting those chess programs that already exist in area schools while encouraging the development of new in-school and after-school programs. For more information, visit www.saintlouischessclub.org.

Connect with Us

Learn more about the WCHOF online at www.WorldChessHOF.org.
Engage with the @WorldChessHOF on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.
World Chess Hall of Fame hashtag: #WorldChessHOF