"Building Champions: In the Classroom and the Community"

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The RESURGENCE of AMERICAN CHESS



SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB/LENNART OOTES

2017 Ultimate Moves Match.

Why Chess in Saint Louis?

BY RANDY BAUER

Board of Directors, United States Chess Federation

Ten years ago, I was having lunch with Rex Sinquefield, discussing the possibility of doing a study on the City of Saint Louis' finances. At one point, the conversation turned to chess, and Rex's passion for the game was immediately evident. I mentioned that the U.S. Championship was looking for a sponsor, and he expressed interest.

I've been in literally thousands of similar types of business and civic meetings over the years, and few 'expressions of interest' ever pan out. None of those meetings, however, were with Rex Sinquefield. A contract was signed a few months later and the first of what will be 10 consecutive U.S. Championships was held in grand fashion at the similarly grand Saint Louis Chess Club (STLCC).

In the following years, besides the U.S. Championship, Saint Louis has hosted major international tournaments (the flagship being the Sinquefield Cup, which regularly attracts the world's champions and top contenders), matches and other

national, state and regional events. It has become THE constant in U.S. chess—a beacon and gravitational force that regularly attracts 'the best and the brightest' to the STLCC and the city.

The best players in the U.S.-and the world-have taken note. It is no accident that the top board on the 2016 U.S. gold medal winning Olympiad team Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana is a Saint Louis resident, and teammate Roy Robson attended college in the city. Former World Champion Garry Kasparov, commenting on the U.S. victory at the Olympiad, tweeted, "Rex Singuefield and his CCSCSL are the beating heart of Team USA. He deserves a medal from chess!" Grandmaster Ben Finegold sums it up nicely: "Everyone in the world knows this chess club."

While the accolades of the world's elite are noteworthy, equally impressive are the opportunities it provides to players at all levels—particularly kids. Rex and Jeanne Sinquefield are passionate about educational achievement for all, and they and the club are putting chess in local schools throughout Saint Louis. As former U.S. Women's Champion Jennifer

Shahade puts it, "this is the Mecca of chess. Obviously, the financial contributions are so considerable and so generous. But a lot of the passion to donate money is that Rex really absolutely loves chess and sees the multifaceted nature of the game."

The recent heightened interest in chess in the U.S. is on display in movies, TV, magazines and advertisements. I would venture to say that much of that interest can be traced back to Saint Louis. Grandmaster Maurice Ashley explains it this way: "I think the American chess scene has become much stronger because of what's happening in Saint Louis. The magic of the STLCC. The fact that they bring so many top, elite events to the U.S. Because of that, everyone's inspired. Everyone–from the top players down to the collegiate ranks down to the scholastic level. And that's going to continue. It's a runaway train right now."

World Champion Kasparov echoed this sentiment in a fitting tribute to Rex's vision: "now, here in Saint Louis, we are facing the renaissance of the great game of chess."

GATEWAY TO THE NEW CHESS WORLD

BY GARRY KASPAROV

Legendary World Champion

2018 will be an eventful year in the chess world. This November, Magnus Carlsen, the reigning world champion, will defend his crown against Fabiano Caruana, who last week became the first American since Bobby Fischer in 1972 to become the challenger for the undisputed World Chess Championship.

Such a pairing would have sounded fantastical when I was climbing the chess Olympus in the 1980s, back when the mighty Soviet chess machine to which I belonged boasted a majority of the world's elite players. Consider that Carlsen captured the title from Viswanathan Anand of India in 2013, and now, a Norwegian versus an American! Thanks largely to a generation raised with super-strong chess computers and the internet, chess has become truly global.

Just as remarkably, to the extent that chess has a new center of gravity it is the United States, and in particular, Saint Louis, Missouri. Caruana won the right to challenge Carlsen by winning the Candidates Tournament on March 27, 2018 in Berlin. Among the eight players in that tournament were two Americans: Caruana and Wesley So. Both live in Saint Louis.

Nor is this new, chesscentric Spirit of Saint Louis limited to hosting elite players. The upcoming championship clash will be followed live online by millions of spectators watching a broadcast from Saint Louis. That's where three superbly entertaining Grandmasters will break down each move from a studio in the basement of the local chess club, a few blocks from Forest Park. These broadcasts have become a way for chess to transcend its small traditional audience, even if my cherished game is not quite ready to compete with the Super

Bowl for viewers.

This April, the second floor of the same building will host the U.S. Chess Championships for the 10th consecutive year. Nearly half the participants in the U.S. Chess Championship will be Saint Louisan: Of the top 10 American players, not only Caruana and So but also Ray Robson and Varuzhan Akobian now live there. Top international players also flock to the Gateway City. In August, the world's best will compete there in the sixth annual Sinquefield Cup, one of the world's strongest events.

This feast of chess talent is a classic American melting pot. Caruana was born in Miami, learned to play in Brooklyn, and spent most of his teenage years in Europe. So, the current U.S. Champion, was born in the Philippines, Akobian in Armenia, and Robson in Guam. So and Robson both moved to Saint Louis to attend Webster University in Saint Louis's suburbs, on chess scholarships. Webster's powerhouse team, coached by the Hungarian-born Grandmaster Susan Polgar, won the U.S. college championship five years running through last year. (Saint Louis University was a credible third in 2017).

How did all of this come to pass? You can work your way back by following the money, but money without passion is often squandered. In this case, it leads you back to a man, and a family, with a remarkable passion for chess.

In 2005, Rex Sinquefield, a Saint Louis native who had made a fortune in the financial services business, moved back home. One of his goals was policy influence; a conservative-libertarian, Sinquefield is now Missouri's biggestand therefore most controversial-political donor. But it was a lower-profile Sinquefield project that may turn out to have even longer-lasting influence in





Saint Louis Chess Club 10 Year Anniversary Celebration

TUESDAY, JULY 17 | 10 A.M. - 10 P.M.

Join us as we celebrate the Saint Louis Chess Club's ten year anniversary with family-friendly activities, live performances, simul games, special programs, and more on the Chess Campus.

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SAINT LOUIS **CHESS HISTORY**

BY SHANNON BAILEY Chief Curator,

World Chess Hall of Fame The City of Saint Louis has a lengthy chess heritage

that dates back to the 19th

In 1886, the city hosted a

segment of the first World Chess Championship, which

culminated with Wilhelm Steinitz defeating Johannes Zukertort to become the first World Chess Champion. The 1904 World's Fair drew national and international visitors to Saint Louis. It also served as an occasion to hold both the Seventh Annual American Chess Congress and the Western Chess Association Championship (now known as the U.S. Open Chess Championship) in the city. The U.S. Open Chess Championship would later be held in Saint Louis in 1941 and 1960.

From the 1940s through the 1970s, Robert Steinmeyer was Missouri's premier

chess talent, consistently winning the Saint Louis District Championship. Leroy Muhammad (formerly Leroy Jackson) also shot to both local and national fame during the late 1960s, becoming the U.S. Junior Open Champion in 1966 and winning the Saint Louis City Championship from 1966-69. They were part of a lively chess scene in the city, which included the Capablanca Chess Club named for famed World Chess Champion José Raúl Capablanca.

Today, Saint Louis is well known as a chess center nationally and internationally, and was named the national chess capital by the U.S. Senate in 2014. Since 2008, the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis has hosted tournaments including the U.S. Chess Championship, U.S. Women's Chess Championship, U.S. Junior Championship, U.S. Girls'



WORLD CHESS HALL OF FAME

Etching of Johannes Zukertort and Wilhelm Steinitz Competing at the 1886 World Chess Championship, which was partially held in Saint Louis, Missouri.

Junior Championship, along with the Sinquefield Cup and the Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz, two tournaments that have drawn the best players from the international community. The World Chess Hall of Fame relocated to Saint Louis in 2011, making the city a place where chess history happens, and where the game's best players, history, and culture are

SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB MAKES HUGE POSITIVE IMPACT ON SAINT LOUIS



SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB

Mayor Francis Slay presents a proclamation to Rex Sinquefield declaring May 2009 "Saint Louis Chess Club Month" at the Opening Ceremony of the 2009 U.S. Chess Championships. **BY FRANCIS SLAY** Former Mayor of Saint Louis

Since its founding in 2008, the Saint Louis Chess Club has become not only a place where people can learn and play chess, but also an educational and cultural center. It is an important anchor and draw for the city's Central West End, and a focal point and catalyst for events and activities that have drawn national and global attention and interest.

of Dr. Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield, and with the beautiful facilities and talented team at the Chess Club, Saint Louis has hosted both the U.S. Chess Championship and the U.S. Women's Chess Championship for 9 straight years, and will be the host

again this year. The prestigious Sinquefield Cup, billed as the strongest tournament in the history of chess, has also been hosted here annually since its inception in 2013.

The Chess Campus is has been officially recognized by the United States Senate as the Chess Capital of the United States of America and is the subject of a Forbes video: "St. Louis: America's Premier Chess Destination." It is also is home to the largest chess piece in the world as recognized by Guinness.

And now, for the first time in Saint Louis history, a city resident, Fabiano Caruana, has qualified for the world title match to be held in November.

All this chess activity has burnished the Saint Louis region's image and is attracting visitors from around the world.

On the occasion of the Chess Club's 10th Anniversary, the Saint Louis region has much to be proud of and celebrate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The World Chess Hall of Fame acknowledges Dr. Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield whose generous support makes our exhibitions possible.

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Helping build Chess in Saint Louis for over a decade.



FROM PAGE 1

Saint Louis and beyond. His goal was to boost the popularity of a game he'd enjoyed since boyhood, chess. Partly he just wanted more of his fellow Saint Louisans to enjoy it. But he also believed, as I do, that the game chess helps instill self-discipline and strategic thinking in young minds.

Sinquefield bought a 6,000 square foot building in an old neighborhood that evokes Washington's Georgetown and whose residents had once included T.S. Eliot and Tennessee Williams. In July 2008, he reopened the structure as the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis, with plush furnishings, an attractive game room, and a broadcast studio in the basement. Then the club, and the Sinquefields, started to build a chess culture in Saint Louis. It's truly a family affair. Rex's

dynamic wife Jeanne was a driving force behind the Boy Scouts of America adding a chess merit badge. Their son Randy runs the state-of-the-art studio that brings the chess world to Saint Louis online. This isn't just about money, but tremendous dedication and

hard work. Instead of looking for a quick splash, they have built a complete system for kids, parents, coaches, and schools. Half a world away from Moscow, Saint Louis is the true heir to the Soviet chess machine. Perhaps this is why it's the only place I feel comfortable occasionally breaking my retirement vows to test myself at the board-albeit with more enjoyment than sporting success of late.

Today there are chess programs in 140 schools across the metropolitan area, including the public schools in the city and in Ferguson, as well as in several rural districts in central Missouri. The club offers frequent tournaments, group lessons, private lessons, lectures and even summer camps. With more than 1,000 members, it's now among the world's largest chess clubs.

Before this Saint Louis chess Renaissance, the United States did not have a suitable venue for world-class tournaments. It didn't have a deep-pocketed champion who would sponsor a world-class tournament out of his own pocket. It didn't have programs to attract and develop world-class players capable of producing a gold-medal Olympiad team and a world championship challenger.

Now the U.S. has all of those things-because Saint Louis has all of those things. I wouldn't say that Rex Sinquefield did it entirely from scratch, however. After all, the first official world chess champion ship in 1886 included a brief stop in Saint Louis! But if Rex's master strategy continues to bear fruit, the world chess championship may soon return to his beloved birth place. It would be a fitting crowning achievement for what has become

CHESS CLUB OPENING & TENTH ANNIVERSARY



Chess Club staff portrait during the 2009 U.S. Chess Championships.

BY TONY RICH

Executive Director, Saint Louis Chess Club

When Rex Sinquefield retired and moved back to Missouri, the modern-day renaissance man found himself with more time to embrace his wide range of hobbies. In a meeting with local sculptor Bill Smith, chess entered the conversation, and upon discovering his interest in the game, Bill suggested that Rex should meet his Uncle Bob. That man was none other than Missouri Chess Hall of Fame inductee and National Master Robert "Bob" Jacobs.

Among Rex's many questions for Bob was this: "where do people play chess in Saint Louis?" Sadly, Bob had to admit the anemic state of chess in a city so steeped in the history of the game. People played wherever they could, including bookstores, libraries, and cafes when

space and time permitted. Serious tournaments were few and far between. So it was a cool fall even-

ing in October of 2007 when Rex invited a group of chess players, organizers and tournament directors to dinner with the nebulous goal of starting a chess club. Two things were important from the outset. First, we wanted to introduce students to the game, both to develop a love of chess and to bolster educational outcomes. The second goal was to create a warm, inviting space for the local community to play. As we discussed this exciting opportunity, none of us could fathom where the club would be 10 years later.

Construction began in January of 2008 with these goals in mind. Candidly, I must admit to being underwhelmed when I first saw the subdivided space that would eventually house the Saint Louis Chess Club. It seemed

like an impossible task to create one of the nicest clubs in the world from a dingy basement, outdated apartments. a worn retail area, and abandoned office space. But with each passing day, and as the construction crew painted patched and rebuilt, the diamond in the rough began to

take shape.

The furniture was installed and chess boards were set up. Final touches were added with a fevered pitch. When the club officially opened to the public on July 17th, 2008, Saint Louis embraced us, coming in droves to play learn and watch. We anticipated having less than 300 members within our first year of operation. To every one's surprise, we surpassed that number in just the first six months, and by year's end there were more than 600 members. Today the club is proud to have more than 1000 members!

REDESIGNING A SAINT LOUIS LANDMARK

BY PAIGE PEDERSEN

Graphic Designer, Saint Louis Chess Campus

The Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis (CCSCSL) is excited to announce its commemorative rebrand, coinciding with its tenth anniversary. For the past decade, the CCSCSL has built its reputation as the premier destination for chess from its Midwestern home. Throughout 2018, the Chess Club will celebrate its tenth year with commemorative tournament graphics, a robust programming calendar, and a brand new name-Saint Louis Chess Club (STLCC).

A DISTINCTLY SAINT LOUIS MARK

Saint Louis pride is at the heart of every Chess Club endeavor, and what represents Saint Louis like the Gateway Arch? The "Gateway to the West is the Gateway to Chess" said a headline in 2016, and it's never been more true. The Club's new brand identity celebrates the city's heritage with Saarinen's modernist arch perched atop golden fleur de lis [a symbol of Saint Louis, and existing brand imagery for the Club], and highlights chess as a landmark of the United States' Chess Capital.

The resurgence of chess in the United States, largely due to the efforts of the Saint Louis Chess Club, has encouraged chess organizations, publications, and brands to flourish across America. The STLCC needed to strengthen its brand recognition and refresh its image as a pioneer of chess in the digital age by streamlining the organization's name. Colloquially known as the "Saint Louis Chess Club," we've shortened the name. The simpler, straightforward moniker clarifies the brand and focuses its emphasis on the Saint Louis community.

MONOGRAM

Reworking the logo mark began on paper, starting with the centerpiece of the existing logo—the emblem. The Chess Club's acronym was drawn over and over again, rearranging the letters into different shapes and combinations. About 100+ thumbnail sketches later, these drafts moved from paper to screen and continued to refine the mark by simplifying the forms for a refreshed silhouette.

The widened base of the slanted 'L', combined with the 't' on top, mimics the form of the King piece with its signature cross-shaped finial—the flanking C's remain, losing their engraved look and now enjoy a modern symmetrical curve and elegantly angled serifs.

TYPOGRAPHY

While finalizing the form of the new emblem, the need for versatility came to the forefront–business cards, letterhead, brochures, internet-based media, broadcast graphics, even embroidery and merchandise design-the new logo needed to to be responsive to its environment. Simplified variations on the primary logo design, paired





Expanded color palette

with a duo of versatile, workhorse typefaces, the letterforms receive a tailored, modern update.

Typefaces Acta and TT Norms [aptly named for use by a chess organization] replace Trajan and Gotham. A wide range of weights, characters, and multilingual support in each, the clean, fresh newspaper serif and modern geometric Grotesk cater to both the classical elegance of the game, as well as the geometric minimalism and symmetry of the chessboard.

While black and white have long been ubiquitous on the chessboard, the symbolic grid began in India as a field of red and green long before its European transition to black and white. Returning to chess' vibrant roots, the modular color system unites the STLCC's branded initiatives while celebrating the diverse history of the game and the breadth of programming across the campus. The existing colors black, white, and gold–are expanded to integrate the brand refresh of the World Chess Hall of Fame [the arts branch of the Saint Louis Chess Campus] which shares several key staff members and coordinates its exhibitions with the

BUILDING CHAMPIONS:

Club's tournament schedule.

IN THE CLASSROOM & THE COMMUNITY

Today, anyone with an internet connection can watch world-class chess matches and listen to expert commentators break down the tension of the game [for a layperson like me, this is essential] on one of the Chess Club's online streaming platforms. These broadcasts reach hundreds of millions of viewers during national or international tournaments, and the branding of the Club needed to reflect their imprint on the global chess scene.

Not only does the Saint Louis Chess Club host and broadcast the world's highest-rated tournaments and matches—it's a place where people of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels are welcome to sit down and play. Offerings include a wide variety of classes, free events that bring chess outdoors, outreach that teaches critical thinking skills and confidence, and an overarching mission to elevate the citizens and neighborhoods throughout the city. These programs are central to the Chess Club's mission and underline their investment in promoting the game both on a local and international level.

Just as a Grandmaster considers his strategy many moves ahead, the Chess Club's rebrand looks to the future of the organization [as well as representations of chess] and its presence worldwide. The visual lexicon of this ancient game is given new life as the Saint Louis Chess Club continues to innovate and pioneer American Chess in the 21st century.

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IN MEMORIAM



Hans Berliner (1929-2017) U.S. Chess Hall of Fame

The impact of computers on modern chess cannot be underestimated. Today everyone from World Chess Champions to club players regularly use chess engines to study the game, and those who don't do so at their peril. Hans Berliner is not solely responsible for this state of affairs, but he can take much of the credit as one of the fathers of modern computer chess. His program Hitech, developed while he was a professor at Carnegie Mellon, was the first chess computer to defeat a Grandmaster in a tournament game. Berliner was not the first computer chess programmer, but he had a unique perspective as the 5th World Correspondence Chess



Arthur Bisguier U.S. Chess Hall of Fame

One of the most friendly Grandmasters, Arthur Bisguier will be remembered for not only winning three U.S. Open Chess Championships, participating in two Interzonals and playing on five American Olympiad teams, but also as one of the great chess ambassadors. For over half a century, Bisguier regularly gave lectures and played simultaneous exhibitions at chess clubs, schools, and prisons around the United States. He further contributed to the popularity of the game through his writings, including a regular column in Chess Review magazine for many years called "Chess Biscuits" and a column for the Christian Science Monitor.



Walter Browne (1949-2015)

U.S. Chess Hall of Fame

Walter Browne's nickname, "Mr. Six-Time," says it all. The Australian-born, but New York raised, Grandmaster was U.S. Chess Champion on six occasions, just two short of Bobby Fischer's all-time record. Bobby won every U.S. Championship he played in from the end of 1957 to

the last days of 1966, but Browne's record was almost as good in his first seven championships-a third place finish in his debut in 1973 followed by six consecutive wins (1974, 1975, 1977, 1980, 1981, and 1983). Though he never came close to winning another championship after 1983, Walter Browne's place in chess history is secure.



Robert Byrne

U.S. Chess Hall of Fame

Robert Byrne is a perfect example of the handicaps top-level American chess players faced for much of the 20th century. One of a group of outstanding young players that came to the fore after World War II, which included fellow future U.S. Chess Hall of Famers Hans Berliner, Arthur Bisguier, Donald Byrne (his brother), and Larry Evans, Byrne only peaked as a player in his 40s. This was due in large part because he was only able to play full-time after the 1972 Fischer-Spassky World Championship brightened the prospects for professional chess players. Previous to this, like his brother Donald, he was a college professor.



Larry Evans (1932-2010) U.S. Chess Hall of Fame

Larry Evans won the U.S. Chess Championship four times and might have made it six titles if not for one Bobby Fischer. In 1963/64 and 1966 Evans finished second with 7.5-3.5, normally a winning score, but Bobby scored 11-0 and 9.5-1.5! Besides being one of the strongest American Grandmasters of the 20th century, Evans was a prolific chess journalist whose syndicated newspaper column ran for over four decades. He may be best remembered for a book he did not write, but in which he played an important supporting role–Fischer's classic My 60 Memorable Games.



Bobby Fischer World & U.S. Chess Halls of Fame

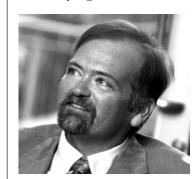
Who is the greatest chess player of all-time? Is it Paul Morphy, far ahead of his contemporaries, but with a brief career? Does Emanuel Lasker, World Championship

a record 27 years, get the nod? | and, with apologies to Akiva Should Anatoly Karpov's over 160 first places finishes in tournaments make him the greatest ever or does this honor go to Garry Kasparov who defeated Karpov and reigned from 1985 to 2000? Those who like their World Champions undefeated point to Bobby Fischer and his dominance of the 1971-1972 World Champion cycle where he scored 18.5-2.5 in three Candidates matches before defeating Boris Spassky.



Jeremy Gaige U.S. Chess Hall of Fame

Jeremy Gaige was not a strong player, nor did he organize important tournaments. None of the books he wrote were best-sellers, and yet his influence on the chess world has been profound. As Bill James, the pioneering statistician, is to baseball, so Jeremy Gaige is to chess, and to the great benefit of writers and historians. Before Gaige, much of what passed for chess history was anecdotal and often wrong. Through his groundbreaking works, including the monumental Chess Personalia: A Biobibliography, he led chess archivists out of the dark ages, and in so doing raised the bar for future chroniclers of the royal game.



Bill Hall

Bill Hall was the Executive Director of the U.S. Chess Federation from 2005 to 2013. A graduate of MIT and valedictorian of Cumberland County High School, Bill taught high school math before stepping into the role at the USCF. He was a scholastic chess player and continually promoted chess in schools. Bill oversaw the USCF's relocation from New York to Tennessee and awarded the Saint Louis Chess Club its first U.S. Championship in 2009. Bill's tireless work to promote the game he loved will live on in the legacy he created.



Viktor Korchnoi (1931-2016)

World Chess Hall of Fame Viktor Korchnoi will be remembered for the many beautiful games he played

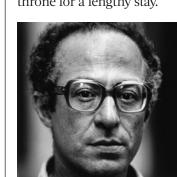
Rubinstein and Paul Keres, as the strongest player of all time never to become World Champion. Korchnoi, who was a candidate for the World Championship on ten occasions (1962, 1968, 1971, 1974, 1977, 1980, 1983, 1985, 1988, and 1991), had the misfortune to hit his peak at exactly the same time Anatoly Karpov, one of the greatest of the greats, was at his zenith. The result was three lost matches, including a heartbreaking 6-5



Alla Kushnir World Chess Hall of Fame

Alla Kushnir, like Viktor Korchnoi, also had the misfortune of having her peak

years overlap with those of one of the greatest of World Chess Champions, in her case the legendary Nona Gaprindashvili. The two met in Women's World Championship matches on three separate occasions from 1965 to 1972. Gaprindashvili won the first two matches 8.5-4.5 but in the third she faced a stiff challenge and won by only the narrowest of margins, 8.5-7.5. If not for Gaprindashvili it would have been Kushnir who sat on the throne for a lengthy stay.



Anatoly Lein U.S. Chess Hall of Fame

Born on March 28, 1931, in Leningrad, Anatoly Lein only became a Grandmaster in 1968 at the age of 37. He immigrated to the United States in 1976 and quickly became a leading player, tying for first in the World and U.S. Opens that year and representing his new homeland in the 1978 Chess Olympiad. He and fellow U.S. Chess Hall of Famer Leonid Shamkovich were the beginning of a massive wave of immigration from the Soviet Union that would transform American chess. Lein played tournament chess into his 80s and will be remembered for his incredible passion for



James Miller

James "The James Game' Miller was more than just

a regular at the Saint Louis Chess Club. His outgoing personality and friendly demeanor made him an easily approachable opponent and a joy to play against. James had the ability to make you smile whether you were winning or losing, and his one-liners were a constant source of Catalyst Award. amusement for members and staff alike. With his death, the

our most loyal members, but also a part of our family. The unique brand of chess he brought to the Club on a daily basis earned him the nickname, "The James Game," characterized by his uncharacteristic openings that could, at times, stymie his opponents. He liked the idea of forcing people out of their element by presenting them with challenging and

Chess Club lost not just one of

unfamiliar positions. His upbeat personality and cheery disposition were infectious. James had the ability to brighten the room when he would walk in, and his presence at the Club is sorely missed.



Jacqueline **Piatigorsky** U.S. Chess Hall of Fame

Few individuals have been as fully involved in the chess world as Jacqueline Piatigorsky. Despite only taking up the game in her thirties, she became one of the top female players in the United States, even representing her country in a Chess Olympiad, but it is best remembered. The two Piatigorsky Cups were among the strongest tournaments held in the 20th century and were noted for the excellent conditions offered to both players and spectators. Her sponsorship of chess for youth and the disadvantaged was several decades ahead of



its time.

Adonis Reddick

Adonis was a fixture on the Saint Louis chess scene.

Adonis played chess back when Saint Louis Chess was a small community of sidewalk players in the Loop in University City. When he became a member of the Saint Louis Chess Club, his infectious smile and laugh was an instant connection with all our members. While his smile and laugh were always present, so was his determination and confidence to play anyone and beat them.

His passion for chess was second to his advocacy for the rights of the disabled. He was the founder of the Association of Spanish Lake Advocates,

an organization promoting disability rights, a member of the leadership team for the Coalition for Truth in Independence, and a member of the St. Louis ARC's Social Justice and Human Rights Committee. In 2015 he won the Self Advocate of the Year

The Saint Louis Chess Club and all of the Saint Louis Community lost a treasure of



Bill Wright

William H. (Bill) Wright was a stalwart member of the Saint Louis Chess community.

Bill was a retired Marine who bore a pleasant, friendly demeanor. Because of his true love for chess, he was elected annually to represent the Saint Louis region as a Missouri Chess Association Board Member.

In 2001, Bill bravely revived the Saint Louis Open in a sagging Saint Louis chess scene. Thanks to his organizational skills, the tourney managed to attract more than 60 players. The tournament has grown in strength and numbers in the intervening years, and it now is rightfully named after him.

As a member of the original Board of Directors, Bill was integral in helping get the Saint Louis Chess Club up and running. He introduced Rex Sinquefield to Tony Rich and the rest is history.

Bill would always greet new members of the Club with as an organizer and chess | a smile. His enthusiasm for philanthropist that she is | chess was contagious and our membership base far exceeded the club's expectations in the first year.

Bill was always up for a challenge, and wouldn't miss a tournament in Missouri or the surrounding area. He often sold chess equipment at these events, sharing his true passion for the game with everyone in the process. Bill also had an impressive chess set collection, and he would loan parts of that collection to his local library for display use.

In 2009, because of his lifelong dedication to the royal game, Bill was inducted into the Missouri Chess Hall of Fame.

The Saint Louis chess community was lucky to know such a loyal, respectable man. Semper Fi, Mr. Wright.

National

Saint Louis Chess Campus





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Senate: Saint Louis is "Chess Capital of the United States"

The Saint Louis Chess Club has become a very big player in the world of chess, and the United States Senate noticed.

BY JIM TALENT

Former U.S. Senator for Missouri

The Saint Louis Chess Club has become a very big player in the world of chess, and the United States Senate noticed it.

Ten years ago, the Saint Louis area wasn't on the map where chess was concerned. Sure there were players in the area-there are chess enthusiasts almost everywhere in the world-but there was no regional focus on the sport and no center of energy and activity.

All that changed in 2008 with the founding of the Saint Louis Chess Club. It was the brainchild of Rex Sinquefield, who wanted to combine his love of chess with his support for the Saint Louis region. His vision was to bring the pleasure of chess to thousands of people (and especially kids) in the metro area, while making Saint Louis a recognized leader in the sport.

The impact of the Chess Club was immediate

Saint Louis hosted the U.S. Chess

Championship and the Women's Chess Championship four years in a row, from 2009-2012. It hosted the Junior Closed Chess Championship from 2010-2012. Those are the three most prestigious, invitation only chess tournaments in the United States. As a result, the U.S. Chess Federation named the Chess Club the "Club of the Year" in 2009 and

In addition, the Saint Louis Chess Club became a center of education and outreach. In 2011 and 2012, the club reached over 3,000 students in over 100 schools and community centers across the region.

Congress noticed this activity. In 2014, the Senate unanimously passed a resolution recognizing the Chess Club for its achievements and designating Saint Louis as the Chess Capital of the United States.

Since then the Club has gone on to even bigger things: the Chess Club has gone on to host the U.S. Girls' Junior Championship, introduce a new "Classic series" of tournaments for players just under the

super GM elite, host the inaugural Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz in which chess legend Garry Kasparov came out of a 12 year retirement to participate, sponsor the first ever international PRO Chess League champions, and backs the new collegiate powerhouse Saint Louis University. And there is more to come.

Chess is a great game, but it's much more than that. It promotes higher level thinking skills and problem solving. It offers young people the chance to develop critical reasoning and planning ability. And it's a great equalizer: young or old, rich or poor, people of all different backgrounds compete on the same playing field. All they need is a board, the pieces, and enthusiasts of the game to teach and encourage them.

With the advent of the Saint Louis Chess Club 10 years ago, chess became part of the rich heritage of our region. Saint Louis is the chess capital of the United States. Ten years from now, it may well be the chess capital of the world.



Photographs from the Congressional Chess Match in Washington, D.C.,

U.S. Chess Championships

BY ALEX ONISCHUK Grandmaster

The 2009 U.S. Chess Championship in Saint Louis started a new era in American chess, and the Saint Louis Chess Club is the driving force behind chess in our country. The Club hosts the U.S. Championship each year, but it does a lot more than that!

The Club organizes a lot of events for scholastic and junior players. It runs GM and IM norm tournaments, and it provides support for our national teams. All this activity has motivated many players, including myself, to work harder on our chess. The U.S. Championship has, as a result, become a much stronger event in just a few

I have played in all the U.S. Chess Championships in Saint Louis. The exceptional organization and fantastic atmosphere make the event very special. People travel to Saint Louis from every corner of America to watch the games, and it is nice to see so many chess fans at the Chess Club. I always have friends that come to Saint Louis to support me during the U.S. Championships.

I also enjoy watching all the broadcasts from Saint Louis. The students at Texas Tech follow all the major tournaments in Saint Louis on a big TV screen in my

In the past ten years I have spent so much time in Saint Louis that it feels like my second home. I have made thousands of chess moves at the Chess Club and I have walked every trail in Forest Park. One of my greatest memories in chess is our team preparation for the 2012 Chess Olympiad in Istanbul at Rex and Jeanne Sinquefield's farmhouse.

I'm very grateful to everyone who makes the U.S. Championship and other events in Saint Louis so great, and I'm looking forward to new tournaments at the Chess Club, both as a player and a spectator.



• Playoff between GM Alex Onischuk and GM Wesley So during the 2017 U.S. Championship

2 2009 U.S. Chess Championship Field

3 GM Hikaru Nakamura contemplates his next move during Round 10 of the 2015 U.S. Chess Championship

• GM Sam Sevian vs. GM Ray Robson during Round 9 of the 2015 U.S. Chess Championship

■ GM Alex Onischuk during Round 1 of the 2016 U.S. Chess Championship.







SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB/LENNART OOTES



U.S. Women's Chess Championships

BY JENNIFER SHAHADE Woman Grandmaster, author,

and commentator

In the stunning galleries of the Contemporary Art Museum (CAM), Anna Zatonskih buried her head in her hands, her eyes covered with a thick black scarf. Anna Zatonskih played a five board blindfold simultaneous exhibition, much to the delight of visitors and fans, spellbound by the magnificent mental spectacle. The last man standing was tournament sponsor, Rex Sinquefield, the president of the Saint Louis Chess Club. Rex resigned. Anna, after two hours, five victories, and zero losses could remove the scarf and see the light

The 2009 U.S. Women's Chess Championship, at the time a standalone event, kicked off with a Community Day and opening ceremonies at CAM. In addition to Anna's breathtaking simul, there was my own favorite, hula chess, glamour photo shoots, and a group blindfold game.

The Women's Championship was held for the first time in Saint Louis in 2009. Anna Zatonskih won the ten-player round robin event with a magnificent 8.5/9, for a performance rating of 2765, the standard of a "Super Grandmaster."

In 2010, the event returned to Saint Louis and Irina Krush nearly matched Anna's incredible record, scoring 8/9 for a performance over 2650.

Starting in 2011, the tournament was organized in conjunction with the U.S. Championship, an event that is open to all genders. 2011 was a special year for the U.S. Women's. Eight players were invited to play in a dramatic format that merged knockout style competition with round robin. Tatev Abrahamyan faced off against Zatonskih in the dramatic final, which went down to the wire, awarding Anna her fourth Championship title.

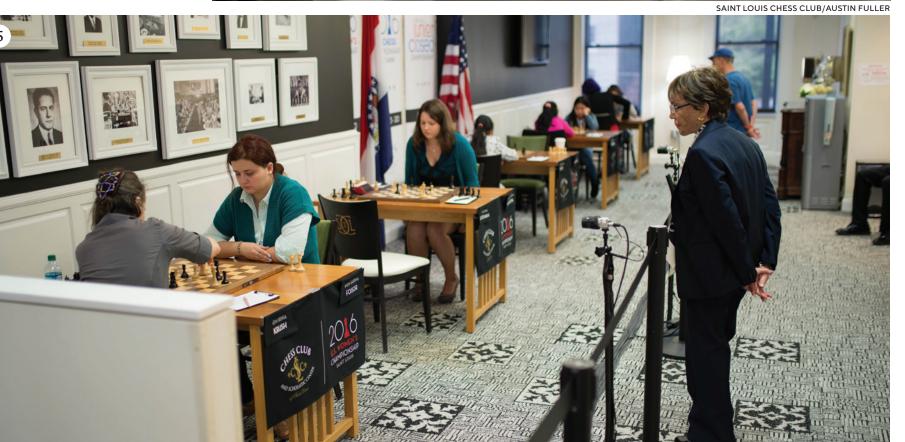
In 2012, Irina won in a tight race that went to playoff. She recalls the game that gave her the title: "I was losing and then she hung a rook! The tiebreaks are always stressful and that was the most dramatic moment in any of them." For the next three years, the Odessa born and Brooklyn raised Grandmaster captured each Championship. This brings Krush's grand total of titles to an incredible seven, with Irina holding the winner's ceremonial check four times in Saint Louis. She earned her very first at the age of 14 years old in Denver. Irina's goal is to win at least ten U.S. Women's titles.

Reflecting on a decade of top women's chess in Saint Louis, Krush said, "It's been wonderful to have such a stage for the U.S. Women's Championship these past ten years in Saint Louis. The prestige of the event has grown dramatically with stronger players, higher









1 2016 U.S. Women's Championship

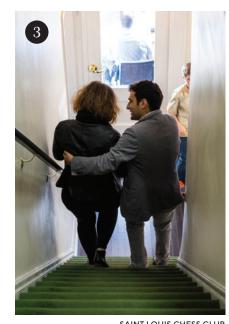
2 2012 U.S. Women's

Championship

WGM Sabina Foisor exits the playing hall after winning the 2017 U.S. Women's Championship

4 GM Maurice Ashley blindfolds WGM Anna Zatonskih during the Pop-Up Chess Demo, a 2016 U.S. Championship side event

5 International Arbiter Carol Jarecki looks on during the 2016 U.S. Women's Championship.



prizes, and unparalleled coverage."

The competition gets fiercer, younger and more determined with each Championship. 12-yearold Carissa Yip defeated the legendary Irina Krush in the 2016 Championship. In the broadcast booth, we knew that as strong and experienced our top two female players were, someone would eventually break Anna and Irina's stronghold, not only in one game, but for the whole Championship.

In 2016, Nazi Paikidze, 22 at the time, prevailed in an inspiring performance. She faced defending champ Irina Krush in the final round, and played a brilliant game with the Black pieces. After realizing that she won her first U.S. Women's Championship, Paikidze covered her face with red nails, overcome with emotion: a career highlight for the Vegas resident born in Russia. Soon after this victory, Paikidze would become one of the most popular chess players in the world for her principled stand against playing the World Women's Championship in Iran due to the requirement to wear the hijab during the games.

2017 saw the most magical U.S. Women's Championship of all. Sabina Foisor entered the competition as an underdog, behind perennial favorites Irina Krush, Anna Zatonskih, as well as defending champ Paikidze. Beyond the board, Sabina had recently lost her beloved mother, Cristina Adela Foisor, also a chess champion. Despite her personal grief, Sabina channeled the spirit of the woman who inspired her chess career in a dramatic performance. She won the Championship with a score of 8/11, finishing the tournament off with a precise queen sacrifice in the final round against the young Apurva Virkud.

Sabina said, "Winning the U.S. Women's Championship has been a goal I worked hard on for years and being able to win it in the memory of the most loving and supporting person in my life has made it exceptionally dear to me. I feel connected to the club as my 10 year anniversary of arriving to the United States is celebrated in the same year as the Club's hosting the U.S. Women's Championships for the 10th time! The new format and prestige of the U.S. Championships in Saint Louis has kept me motivated to [keep] playing chess seriously."

SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB/AUSTIN FULLER

U.S. Junior Chess Championships



SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB/SPECTRUM STUDIOS



SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB/AUSTIN FULLER

BY AKSHAT CHANDRA

Grandmaster

The U.S. Junior Chess Championship has long been one of the most exciting chess events in the country. The invite-only tournament has served as a platform for young and ambitious juniors to display their prowess while fighting for the coveted title of U.S. Junior Champion.

A strong performance in this tournament is a good indicator of future success, as many past winners went on to become Grandmasters. Even the great Bobby Fischer tested his mettle in this tournament, winning in 1956

with a score of 8.5/10. The evolution of this tournament over the years has been intriguing to follow, and something I'd like to take a closer look at.

For many years the U.S. Junior Championship led a nomadic life, as each year the city and venue changed. Enterprising local organizers did their best to seek sponsorship and organize a professionally conducted tournament. Everything changed in 2010, however, when the U.S. Junior Championship found a more permanent abode at the Saint Louis Chess Club (STLCC). The last edition of U.S. Junior before it transitioned to its new home was organized by chess player and coach FM Alex Betaneli in 2009 in the city of Milwaukee.

The move to Saint Louis was a turning point in the tournament's history, as the STLCC built greatly on the successes of the previous organizers and worked hard to elevate the Championship profile. The tournament also benefited from the meteoric rise of the chess vibe in Saint Louis. At its new home, the Junior Championship acquired the publicity and marquee status that was not always visible earlier.

In talking with GM Varuzhan Akobian, who won the 2002 edition, he related to me how the conditions have changed since he played in the U.S. Junior. "It is much more prestigious, and the tournament has a great prize fund," he said, and he laughed as he tried to recall whether there were even monetary prizes when he won the tournament! In addition to the much-improved prize fund, the publicity and playing conditions of the Junior Championship have never been better. The games are now played on elegant wooden electronic boards and are broadcast online.

There is a live commentary team at the Club's studio that covers the tournament and post-game interviews. But to me, the greatest reward of winning the U.S. Junior Championship is earning an automatic qualification to play the U.S. Championship, a privilege that was added during the Championship's tenure at the Club. I won the U.S. Junior event in 2015 in my very first appearance and had the honor of participating in the 2016 U.S. Championship.

Saint Louis, as the nation's chess capital, has become the proving grounds for future top chess players, and it is only fitting that the U.S. Junior Championship found its permanent residence here.

From left to right, Jeffery Xiong during Round 8 of the 2016 U.S. Junior Championship; 2017 U.S. Junior Championship, Round 6.

U.S. Girls' Junior Chess Championships





SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB/AUSTIN FULLER

and commentator

BY JENNIFER SHAHADE Woman Grandmaster, author,

In 2014, Annie Wang broke Irina Krush's record for the youngest American female chessmaster in history. Annie was 11, and as the New York Times pointed out, she broke a record older than she was. Less than a year later, Carissa Yip broke the same record. On the International stage, and in the same year, Jennifer Yu became the first American girl to win gold at a World Youth Championship since 1987. Do you sense a pattern? The top girls in American chess are becoming stronger with no sign of

slowing down. Many all-girls tournament helped to foster this incredible new generation of female talent. Among them: the National Girls Tournament of Champions, the All-Girls Nationals, and the Susan Polgar Girls' Invitational. All-girls' events may be controversial, but their track record in the U.S., as well as their social benefits, are indisputable.

A crown jewel in the new feast of formidable girls' championships is the U.S. Girls' Junior Championship, founded in 2014 in New Hampshire. Then-US Chess President Ruth Haring said, "The 1st Junior Girls Closed is even stronger than U.S. Women's Championships in the 70s and early 80s."

Claudia Munoz took the 2014 title on tiebreak. The 2015 event was held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with Ashritha Eswaran claiming the title. In 2016, the event moved back to New Hampshire, where Emily Nguyen took clear first with 6.5/9.

The U.S. Girls' Junior Championship moved to Saint Louis in 2017, to coincide with the U.S. Junior Championship, adding events.

Emily Nguyen was thrilled to play in the 2017 edition in Saint Louis: "The Saint Louis Chess Club is probably the nicest club I will ever go to. The playing conditions are perfect, and the community is amazing as well." Her favorite part of playing was the camaraderie with other girls. For aspiring participants, Emily advises, "do not feel too much pressure from the lights and cameras and interviews," but try your best to get in because "Saint Louis and the Girls' Junior [are] really worth it."

Akshita Gorti won the 2017 title with a commanding score of 7/9, 1.5 points ahead of Maggie Feng, her nearest rival. She agreed with Emily about the location. "In my opinion, the Saint Louis Chess Club is the best place to have chess tournaments. The chess club has amazing playing conditions and I loved the live commentary [hosted by WGM Tatev Abrahamyan and GM Alejandro Ramirez.]"

The leisurely one game a day schedule is great practice for prestigious international competitions, in which these same girls represent the United States on a regular basis. It allows ample time for preparation and game analysis, and the girls relax and bond between games, creating lifelong friendships. Gorti recalled celebrating Maggie Feng's birthday, and seeing Wonder Woman with fellow competitors.

The biggest prize of all was a chance for Gorti to be our Wonder Woman. Winning the U.S. Girls' Junior Championship earned her a ticket to the 2018 U.S. Women's Championship.

From top to bottom, WFM Carissa Yip vs. WIM Akshita Gorti during Round 2 of the 2017 U.S. Girls' Junior Championship; Round 5 of the 2017 U.S. Girls' Junior Championship.