

# Barton Grad Takes Center Court

by Becky Risher

When the United States Tennis Association decided to rename their National Tennis Center after the legendary Billie Jean King, they commissioned Rod Morton, class of 1987, to design the dedication plaque. The renaming ceremony kicked off the 2006 US Open and was attended by tennis stars Chris Evert, John McEnroe, Jimmy Connors and Venus Williams. Diana Ross entertained the audience of more than 25,000 seated at stadium court.



After weeks of working on concepts and designs for the plaque, Morton was very pleased with the results. "I was honored to have this opportunity," said Morton. "Over the past year, I've worked with Billie Jean on a couple of projects. I really wanted to design a special, one-of-a-kind piece because I knew how important this event would be for her."

The ceremony and Morton's design were featured on the USA Network and CBS Sports, broadcast to more than 180 countries around the world. *The New York Times* ran the design on the cover of the next day's sports section. Now the plaque is featured prominently on the USTA's web site in a round-up of the year's 10 most memorable moments.

Morton studied commercial design and printmaking at Barton. He earned his master's degree from North Carolina State University's School of Design. Then in 1991, Morton came back to Wilson to teach design as an adjunct professor at Barton. He also taught briefly at Mount Olive College before taking on the role of creative director for a Raleigh-based company, Exide Electronics. In 1996, Morton left the corporate world and started his own marketing firm. Over the years, Morton has worked for numerous clients including CNN, the Home Depot and the PGA. One of his favorite projects brought him back to Barton.

In 2003, Morton designed a book for his former teacher and mentor Chris Wilson who is a prominent painter and tenured Barton professor. The book, *J. Chris Wilson Retrospective*, features 140 of Wilson's paintings from 1967 to 2003. The paintings and book were featured in four galleries around Eastern North Carolina including the Arts Council of Wilson and the Barton Museum.

Four years ago, Morton left North Carolina for his new home in Connecticut. He enjoys working in New York City and even claims to like the weather. Still, Morton has kept his Southern roots. He named his company HOSS, a nod to the Southerner living in the Northeast. He is also on a mission to find good pork barbecue.

"If Bill's or Parker's wants to talk franchise, I'm their man."

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**Tom Miller '85** and his wife, Lisa, announce the graduation of their oldest daughter, Kristin, from Barton Community College in May. Kristin will receive her degree in paralegal studies. She will continue her education after the fall semester. Her daughter, Alyssa, will be a senior at high school this fall. Tom works for Domtar Paper Company. Lisa is an assistant clerk of Superior Court in Chowan County. They live in Edenton.

**Jeff Boykin '86** and his wife, **Anderson Boykin '88**, have two children, Kellie and Kaitlyn. Kellie teaches business and is a former varsity baseball coach at Barton School in Wilson.

**Cathy Muse Bunn '87** and her husband, David, welcomed their second child, Nathan "Garrett" Bunn, on Jan. 28, 2006.

**James Trader '87** became the pastor of the Cane Ridge Methodist Church in Paris, Ky. on Jan. 1. He was born in the birthplace of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the same place where Christ, and the Independent Churches, were born. It was the site of the Revival of 1801. Barton College is named in his honor whom the College is named after. He was pastor there from 1794 to 1801.

**Christy Lilley Rogers** is currently teaching mathematics at Barton College.

**David Edwards '89** completed his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at Simmons College in Boston, Mass. in January. He serves as a physical therapist for clinical operations at Barton College, Inc., a rehabilitation center in Greenville. He would like to hear from his classmates at [David@barton.edu](mailto:David@barton.edu).

**Karen Ryhanych O'Donnell** is currently serving as an expert nurse in malpractice cases.

**Mike Oravec '89** is pleased to announce the opening of his new business, "Hedgehog," a movie-theater in El Paso, Texas. Mike is a former operator. He lives in Chihuahua, Mexico, where he received numerous awards for his service to the community.

## 1990s

**Beth Landrum Chandler** and **Charles Cox** of Raleigh, N.C., were married on Jan. 2006. They now reside in Barton. They have six children. Beth is a teacher at Barton.