

# NATIONAL WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME NOMINATION FORM

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>>>Please Type All Information<<<

**Nominee's Name:** Althea Gibson

**Nominee's Occupation, Field of Achievement or Title:** Athlete  
(example: Suffragist, Author, Political Activist, Scientist, Explorer, Senator, etc.)

**For what achievement(s) is nominee best known?** Breaking racial barriers in athletics

**Nominee's Date of Birth:** August 27, 1927

**Nominee's Date of Death (if applicable):** n/a

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**Nomination Submitted by:** Jane Doe

**Signature of Submitter:** Jane Doe

**Date:** 01/01/91

**Title/Occupation of Submitter:** Student

**Affiliation/Association to Nominee:** Admirer

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**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Please provide essential biographical information about the nominee on this page only. Essential biographical information includes: birthplace or date of naturalization, education/training, professional/work history, major accomplishments and/or contributions and honors/awards received. DO NOT ATTACH ANOTHER BIO, RESUMÉ OR ARTICLE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR USING THIS FORM. All information in this section should be stated in narrative form. A list of references and citations will not be considered complete biographical information.

**>>>Please Type All Information<<<**

Althea Gibson was born on August 25, 1927 in Silver, South Carolina. She moved to New York City with her family in 1930. Her first tennis instructions came from Harlem's Cosmopolitan Club in 1941. In 1946, she entered and won her first tournament, sponsored by the all-black American Tennis Association (ATA). In 1946, Gibson moved to Wilmington, North Carolina to be coached by Dr. Hubert A. Eaton. She won the first ten straight ATA National Championships.

For the first time in her life, Gibson played against white players at the University of Florida A&M in 1949. In 1950, she entered herself in the first outdoor United States Lawn Tennis Association (USLTA) Championship. She also played in the U.S. National Tennis Championships at Forest Hills, being the first black to do so. In 1951, she competed in the Tennis Championships at Wimbledon for the first time. She began her work with coach Sydney Llewellyn in 1954. The next two years of her career were spent traveling through Southeast Asia on a U.S. State Department sponsored goodwill tennis tour.

In 1956, Gibson won the French Championships and toured the Australian tennis tournament circuit. In 1957 and 1958, she won back to back All-England Championships at Wimbledon and the U.S. National Tennis Championships at Forest Hills. Gibson had other talents outside of tennis as well. In 1959, she released a record album and also appeared in a film. A year later she toured with the Harlem Globetrotters to play exhibition tennis. In 1964, she launched a professional golf career and played on the LPGA.

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**QUESTIONS 1 -3:** Do not repeat the biographical information given in the previous section. Please put the nominee's accomplishments in context; show how they are relevant and valuable to society.

**>>>Please Type All Information<<<**

- 1. Describe in what ways the nominee's contributions have been of the greatest value for the development of the United States of America. (Nominees who are not leaders in their field of accomplishment will not be selected.)**

Althea Gibson's contributions to tennis and sports in general have tremendous value for the development of the United States. There is no doubt Gibson could win at tennis, but there was a greater foe that was an even greater battle – segregation. She also remained unwelcome at some clubs where tournaments were held. Even while winning tournaments, she was denied rooms at hotels. One refused to book reservations for a luncheon in her honor. She helped in the breakdown of segregation in this country. Her contributions paved the way for many other successful black athletes we know today, including Tiger Woods and Venus Williams. She is similar to Jackie Robinson in the fact that was the FIRST to integrate tennis, as he was the first to do so in baseball. Even tennis great Arthur Ashe would have had a more difficult time in tennis if it had not been for Althea Gibson. She helped revolutionize sports in this country, and at the same time, fought a war on racial prejudice and segregation. She helped this country develop!

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- 2. Describe the significant national or global impact of the nominee's achievements. Quantify the answer where possible. (Individuals whose contributions are local or regional will not qualify.)**

Althea Gibson's achievements were known on a global scale. Her winnings at the French Championships and also at Wimbledon brought much needed attention to the sport of tennis, but also to another problem in American society at that time – racism and segregation. She was a pioneer and role model in the United States, while winning tennis tournaments on a much larger (world) scale.

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- 3. Present evidence that the nominee's achievements have (or will have) enduring value. Where applicable, focus your comments on change that has been created and how that change is expected to last over time.**

The effects of Althea's Gibson participation in tennis on the national and international levels are still being felt and will be felt forever. Today, we see many successful black athletes on the field, court, etc. and don't think twice about it, but that would not be the case if there weren't people back in the 1950s and 1960s to get things started. Even though things were extremely tough for her, she overcame unbelievable odds to achieve international acclaim and success. Her journey from the violent streets of Harlem to the royal course of Wimbledon reveals her strength of character and her remarkable composure in the face of racial prejudice. She is a pioneer in both tennis and golf. She got things started for black athletes in the United States and around the world – her contributions will not be forgotten. She proved to the world that blacks could and should be involved in mainstream sports. She showed they are fully capable of competing at the international level and are deserving of the same respect whites were given.

Hopefully, in the future, Gibson's contributions will continue to carry over to other minorities in the United States, giving everyone the same fair chance to play, compete, and win on the world stage. Opportunity is everything and that is what Gibson fought for. Her struggle is long-lasting and inspirational to others in similar situations. Even though the mindset of the world and nation are different from what they were when Gibson was starting out, it can still be tough for minority athletes to get the opportunities to show others what they can do. Hopefully, Althea Gibson's contributions are making it easier and are still helping to break barriers in the sports.

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**Sources of Biographical Information:** Be sure to include complete citations of sources of biographical information used to write the nomination (reference books, periodicals, etc.).

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[www.chron.com/content/chronicle/sports/special/barriers/gibson.html](http://www.chron.com/content/chronicle/sports/special/barriers/gibson.html)

[www.altheagibson.com/bio.html](http://www.altheagibson.com/bio.html)

[www.espn.go.com/sportscentury/features/00014035.html](http://www.espn.go.com/sportscentury/features/00014035.html)