

MIDTOWN Spirit

Spring 2020

The Heroes Issue

Meet the Midtown Heroes, as chosen by our members

On the Horizon: An Interview with
Midtown President Jon Brady

Growing Up Midtown: An Interview with
Former Professional Tennis Player Laura Granville

Tennis Tip: Improve Your Game
with Midtown Coach Tom Gullikson



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MIDTOWN
Spirit
Vol.3, No. 3, Spring 2020

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Midtown Athletic Club
2444 N Elston Ave
Chicago, IL 60647
773.235.2300
www.midtown.com

Michael Mahoney
General Manager and Chief Editor
michael.mahoney@midtown.com

Joelle Beranek
Events Director, Editor and Content
Coordinator
joelle.beranek@midtown.com

Glenn William
Founder

MillRace Design Associates
Principal Designer
234 Mill Street, Rochester, NY 14614
585.232.1180 www.mill-race.com

Kathryn D'Amanda
Creative Director
kda@mill-race.com

Amy Holowczenko
Production Manager
alh@mill-race.com

James D'Amanda and
Katherine Hannula D'Amanda
Contributing Writers

Rhonda Holcomb
Photographer
www.rhondahphoto.com

Alice Xiao
Photographer
www.alicexiao.com

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ON THE COVER:

Sandy Seitz, personal trainer
and group exercise instructor,
with member Despina Karras

Photograph by Rhonda Holcomb



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I am really excited about this issue of *Spirit*. We've devoted almost the entire magazine to Midtown "heroes." We reached out to all members and employees late last year asking they nominate individuals who were their heroes. The response was overwhelming; too many submissions for one issue. The stories written about the nominees were, to say the least, inspiring.

Living in Chicago since 1990, I enjoyed, as many of you did, the rise of the Chicago Bulls to six-time world champions in the mid-nineties. What an exciting time! As I reflect on these memories, like many of you, I wanted to "be like Mike." For clarification, I am referring to Michael Jordan. He was my hero. His athleticism, competitiveness, and sheer presence gave him hero status. I've never had the privilege to meet Mike (although my wife has a picture with him from a Wheaties promotion). To this day I'm certain he'd live up to my expectations and be worthy of the title.

Aging a bit, I hope I've refined my criteria and more thoughtfully considered my personal heroes. My dad for teaching me his work ethic and Mom for her optimism. She always seemed to know what to say when I was down. My U of R tennis coaches, Pete Lyman and Al Kuhn, for their encouragement and generosity, and for fostering my love for tennis. And the many colleagues I've been fortunate to work with for teaching, supporting, and mentoring me.

The truth is anybody can be someone's hero: a friend, relative, teacher or coach. People who demonstrate courage in the face of danger, those who have experienced seemingly insurmountable challenges attributed to injury or illness, and individuals who have survived through difficult times. What they all have in common is the will to meet adversity head on, to not give up, and rise above. Heroes are also people who embrace and help others unconditionally, asking for nothing in return. You will read about these heroes in this issue.

Read along as I have the life stories written about your friends, fellow members and Midtown personnel. They contribute to making Midtown special. I consider myself fortunate for the opportunity to know, be associated and friends with many of these people.

Michael Mahoney
SVP and General Manager

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BULLFROG LAKE HIKE

October 26, 2019

Midtown ventured out to the Palos Trail system to try out Salomon hiking boots and enjoy the fall colors and each others' company.



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BRAULIO FONSECA: DIE LIVING

VETERAN + SWIMMER



Photograph by Sandro Miller

**"My cancer diagnosis at 19
literally saved my life."**



Photograph by Fab Fernandez

Costa Rican born and growing up in a small town, Braulio Fonseca joined the army right out of high school.

Braulio was in an air defense armor unit when he was diagnosed with cancer. A week after he was medically discharged, his army unit lost many lives in Afghanistan. To Braulio, his cancer was a blessing.

Braulio beat cancer and went on to be an ocean lifeguard. College brought him to Chicago to study writing and a career in arts and entertainment industries. After 15 years of being cancer free, he was diagnosed again with cancer that had spread. Chemo was much more intense, and depression about his and others' illnesses set in. Being in a VA hospital, and experiencing illness as an adult, lead Braulio to shut everyone out. He has written about the experience and titled it "Nothing to See Here" as a reflection of how alone he felt. He was struck by the battles of other cancer patients, ones that did not end in recovery as his did.

Swimming was Braulio's way back to recovery after finishing chemo. He finished 1st in an open water swim race four months after his treatments and has been dedicating his fitness challenges to others ever since. He uses each swim stroke to articulate his mantra that what he may be suffering could not be as bad as what others are suffering.

In 2019, Braulio swam Alcatraz without a wetsuit, and on his back, he wore the names of 150 people who had passed from cancer or were in the battle at the time. The names were volunteered from strangers across the country, and even some of his community of Midtown members contributed names. Braulio is at Midtown almost every day and currently working towards a training certificate to help other people fulfill their fitness goals and dreams.



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LINDSEY CLIFFORD

SURVIVOR + MOM + PUBLIC DEFENDER

In 2009, I was diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis. I got so sick so fast I had to have my colon removed in 2010. That required five major GI surgeries, months in the hospital, a year with an ostomy bag, and months of getting all of my nutrition through IV medication called TPN. At my sickest I was 89 pounds and so close to death that I wrote goodbye letters to my friends and family just in case.

My immune system also blessed me with several other autoimmune disorders. Daily shots and other medication keep me as healthy as possible. These struggles have left me with a constant mosaic of scars and bruises. To reclaim my mangled stomach I got a semi-colon tattoo. It serves the dual purpose of making people laugh at the joke, "I don't have a colon, but I have a semi-colon," and stands for all the things I've accomplished since getting sick that I never thought would be possible. I'm still writing my story; illness was not the end.

Ultimately, all of this means I deal with pain and discomfort everyday. For a long time, I resigned to that reality and didn't think I could do much about it. Then, miraculously, I gave birth to two healthy boys despite multiple doctors telling me I couldn't. My boys attend a preschool with a wishing well at the entrance. Every day they make a wish, and too often it's "I wish Mommy was healthy." It shatters my heart that they worry about this, and it's why Midtown has become such an important part of my life.

I start my day at 4:45 am and journey from Glenview to the amazing Midtown facility in the city. Once there, I start with a lot of stretching and core work. Then I jog or use the stationary bike. The goal isn't to burn a million calories, it's to get my body moving, alleviate some pain, and raise my heart rate a little. I normally end with some meditation in the yoga studio and a steam or soak in the hot tub. The most important thing about my Midtown routine is consistency. I am there Monday through Friday, even on the days

when I don't feel well. If I come into Midtown feeling like I'm not sure if I have the energy or stamina to get through my pain and deal with the day, I normally leave feeling empowered and strong enough to do just that. It's a place where I find peace and strength and joy.

After leaving Midtown, I head to my job as a Public Defender at the Cook County Juvenile Justice Center where I help children navigate criminal cases. It's a privilege to do the work I do, but I wish my job didn't exist. I wish we had better options for children in crisis than jail. My proudest moment as a Public Defender started as an appeal arguing for the freedom of an innocent man. I can't imagine a better feeling than getting a man home to his children after years of unnecessary separation. I plan to spend my career continuing this bittersweet work and doing what I can to make an impact on criminal justice reform.

After work, I get to spend a few hours with my vibrant toddlers, laughing, playing and snuggling. By the time the day ends, my tank is empty and I head to bed early to start all over again.

Life as a mom and lawyer with multiple chronic diseases is not all sunshine and rainbows. There are a lot of really hard days. My only secret: relish the imperfection. Choose to laugh when you could cry. Our power in situations beyond our control is

our reaction, and reacting with gratitude and happiness is the most empowering choice you can make as a human. I learned this in a hospital bed. I learn this every day helping resilient children in custody.

To me, that is what a hero is: people who can take a bad situation and make it better.

The nurse who snuck me out of my hospital and took me to Starbucks when I was having a bad day. The friendly staff at Midtown, who probably got up at an ungodly hour, but greet me with a smile everyday at 5:00 am and make sure my experience is fantastic. Little acts of strength and kindness have a big impact on the world. When things get hard, I think about these everyday heroes, so I can step outside my pain and see the blessings all around me.

"At my sickest I was 89 pounds and so close to death that I wrote goodbye letters to my friends and family just in case."



Photograph by Tara Patterson

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"What is your most pressing issue, and how can I help?"

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Sandy Seitz absolutely exudes energy. She is a joyful presence to be felt at Midtown.

As a group exercise instructor and personal trainer, Sandy helps countless members live active lives. But it's about a lot more than burning calories for Sandy; sports and movement saved her life.

The daughter of a Mexican mother and Swiss father, Sandy is the youngest of five siblings and the only member of her family to be born in the United States. As a first-generation American, Sandy has spent much of her life traveling. One consistent part of her upbringing was gymnastics. When her brother died suddenly when Sandy was only 12, it was her team and physical movement that kept her going. The loss of another brother, her father's cancer, a suicide attempt and multiple miscarriages could easily have sent her spiraling, but Sandy always maintained her connection to athletics and group exercise. Her "therapy through movement" has kept her focused and hopeful.

After college, graduate school, and a beautiful rainbow baby girl, Sandy found her passion as a group exercise instructor and personal trainer. The comradery of the group sparks joy for Sandy, and it's clear that the relationships she builds through coaching and training "fill up her cup." As Midtown hero nominations came in, Sandy's name was heard loud and clear. It's easy to see that her clients feel cared about, listened to and inspired.

When Sandy's not at Midtown transforming lives, she enjoys spending time with her 4-1/2 year old daughter, Salsa dancing and playing board games. Best of luck to Sandy as she begins her doctorate program this fall.

ERIC KAMENETSKY'S HERO

PROUD GRANDSON + CARDIO TENNIS REGULAR

My grandfather, Ilya, is my hero.

He was a paratrooper in World War II, received the purple heart for his wounds, and went on to have a successful career as an attorney in Russia. After the war, he spent much of his time at the tennis club, putting in long hours training to be an amateur tennis player. He also split his time in the boxing ring, where he dominated his opponents. Eventually, he immigrated to the United States with my parents in the late 1970s.

I grew up in the northern suburbs of Chicago and tried to spend most of my summers outside. My grandfather took me to the tennis courts when I was 11 years old. We went through drill after drill, which was monotonous and, frankly, boring. I'll always remember how he told me to grip the racquet: "Like a hammer," he would say. It was definitely not the modern forehand. That winter, I decided to join the Northbrook Tennis Club, where I continued to learn basic tennis strategy and techniques. In high school, I joined the tennis team and have been a passionate tennis fan since.

I joined Midtown a few years ago, just before the renovation. I tried a couple of leagues, but once I discovered cardio tennis, I was hooked. Today, I'm a cardio tennis regular, trying to go at least twice a week. It's tough to wake up before the sun rises on Saturday morning, but the 6:30 am cardio class gives me plenty of motivation.

I have two kids, Shane (5) and Ryan (2), and hope I can pass on my passion for tennis to them. As I continue my tennis journey, I'll always be thankful to my grandfather for that first introduction to the sport. Although he's 96 years old today, I hope he will remain on the sidelines cheering for me, taking notes and being my harshest critic. The techniques may have changed slightly since he played, but we will always share the same passion for the sport we love. I hope I can stay healthy and play tennis for many years to come, even if it means adding more braces and compression sleeves along the way.



"I'll always be thankful to my grandfather for that first introduction to the sport. Although he's 96 years old today, I hope he will remain on the sidelines cheering for me, taking notes and being my harshest critic."

MICHELLE CHASTAIN

MOTHER + ER PHYSICIAN

"It's fast-paced, high stakes and high stress, but I wouldn't trade it for anything else in the world."



Michelle Chastain says what motivates her day to day is being the best version of herself, both as a mother and a doctor.

Dr. Michelle Chastain is a graduate of Georgetown University School of Medicine (2010), wife (to husband, Adam Raby) and mother of two (daughter, Mabel and son, Jimmy). She works tirelessly as an emergency care physician at Advocate Christ Medical Center in Oak Lawn. Working the night shift means she never has to miss a special event with her kids. But it also means in the wee hours of the morning, she is tending to sudden illnesses and injuries at one of the Midwest's busiest Level I Trauma Centers. She says that the single biggest challenge to being an ER physician is trying to give each

patient your full attention and the best care when the waiting room, department and hospital are full. It is a tough job trying to diagnose and treat people she has never met in short amounts of time. It's fast-paced, high stakes and high stress, but Michelle wouldn't trade it for anything else in the world.

Michelle always looks forward to her workouts at Midtown including yoga, spin or fitness classes. Her favorite, by far, is WERQ with Logan. She says it's always a blast, and that Logan is a true fitness inspiration.

Michelle hopes to touch the lives of the people she treats and serve as a positive example of everything women can achieve.

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OSIRIS CARROLL

TENNIS COACH + YOUTH MENTOR



"The mission of the OSIRIS Initiative is to provide support and positive direction to youth in the community through health, fitness and mentoring programs."

Osiris Carroll is passionate about educating, motivating and inspiring the faces of the future.

Growing up on the South Side of Chicago, Osiris knew he didn't want to become a statistic. He decided to pay that forward by coaching kids and founding The OSIRIS Initiative, a not-for-profit youth development organization. For anyone who has seen him out on the tennis court it will probably come as a surprise to learn that Osiris didn't play tennis until he was 14. By sheer luck, he happened

to be placed in the tennis portion of a camp where he was a junior counselor. A few years and a college scholarship for tennis later, Osiris is now a Midtown tennis coach. In this role, he loves teaching people how to teach. The OSIRIS Initiative provides tutoring and health and wellness education. It focuses on roller skating as a safe social and exercise outlet. For more information on how you can support The OSIRIS Initiative, email him directly at osiris.carroll@midtown.com.

LEN BECKER

CANCER SURVIVOR + MARATHON RUNNER

Len Becker and his family joined the Club in May 2018. They were excited to have access to a club where their family could enjoy being active, try new sports, and spend quality time together.

In fact, he had just begun training for the 2018 Chicago Marathon and was really interested in adding some cross-training classes to his exercise schedule.

Around the same time, he began to notice his endurance was a bit off. He found himself tired by midday, even taking cat naps. But then additional symptoms began to emerge, like trouble swallowing. By mid-June, the doctors told Len he had a rare form of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a cancer of the blood that destroys the immune system. He started very aggressive chemotherapy at Northwestern the first week in July. One week in the hospital with a constant chemo drip. Then two weeks to recover—mostly in bed at home. Then back to the hospital to start another cycle. The treatments lasted five months with six three-week cycles in all.

By November 2018, Len had gained 45 pounds and lost all his hair. He was weak, exhausted, and seriously ill. With the help of his wife Michelle and some amazing doctors, he left the hospital a week before Thanksgiving—albeit relegated to bed rest and a walker. The cancer was under control, he was in remission, and he was determined to get into better shape.

In December 2018 Len visited Midtown—perhaps for the first time since signing up six months prior—and he remembers being so weak he couldn't make it up the steps to the second floor. Nonetheless, he connected with Midtown trainers Monika and Andy who eased him into an exercise routine. With their encouragement and instruction Len's endurance and strength improved. In the summer of 2019, Len joined Midtown's Run Club with Coach Ted. In Run Club he found glimmers of athleticism he thought were gone for good. This fall, he even picked up a tennis racket (for the first time), and started taking cardio tennis classes with his wife.

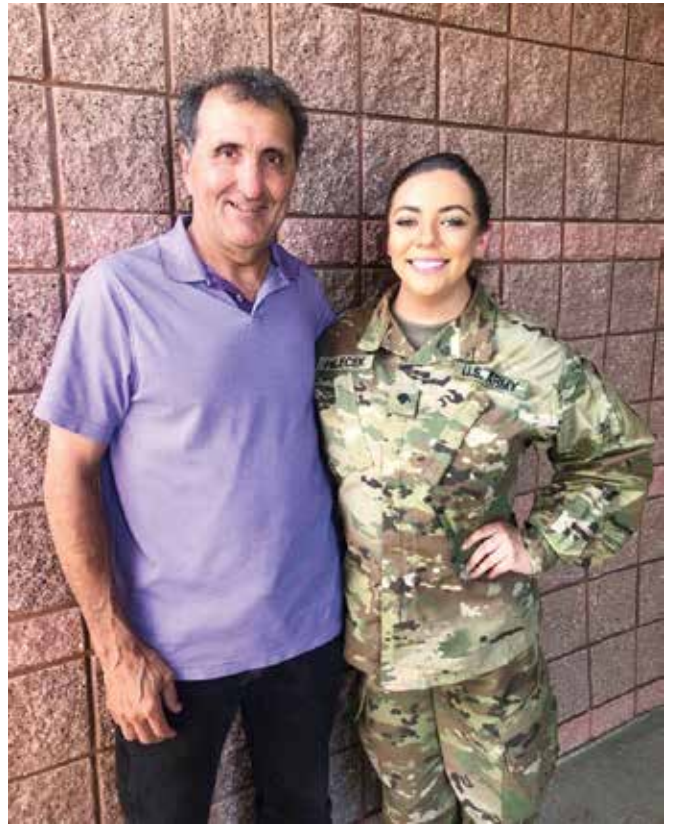
Len's big win came from completing the 2019 Chicago Marathon. He proved to himself that he had emerged out of his cancer nightmare. Today, he feels good and the cancer remains in remission. He is so grateful to coaches Monika, Andy and Ted for helping him get there.

"After my cancer went into remission, completing the Chicago Marathon was my next big win."



DEMERIKE PALECEK

CHROMIUM BARTENDER + ACTIVE MILITARY



Demerike Palecek reminds us why we should never judge a book by its cover.

Demi is an events planner, marketer, and fashion student who bartends at Chromium. She is also Active Duty Army National Guard. Demi first joined the military when she saw how school tuition assistance would greatly unburden her aging parents from education costs. After working in a nuclear weapons division of the Air Force, Demi went on to become the only female military police officer in her division of Army National Guard. Her current role is with combat photography. Demi photographs and tells the story of many national disaster sites, including recent flooding in Southern Illinois. She hopes in the future to be able to educate people about the realities young service people face.

"I hope to be able to share my experiences with others and educate people about the realities young service people face."

KRISTIN EATON

YOGI + GIVER



"We spend all day on Christmas Eve driving around and handing out these bags to people we find living on the street. The smiles from behind their eyes and the hugs we receive are treasured gifts for my children and me."

Kristin Eaton is a yogi truly living the practice.

Kristin believes her purpose in her lifetime is to touch the lives of others in positive ways. She is grateful to be able to share her enthusiasm with others through teaching yoga at Midtown.

Kristin has always worked to show her children to contribute to the world in a genuine way. For over ten years it has been her family's Christmas tradition to spend all day on Christmas Eve distributing bags of nonperishable food, toiletries and cold weather clothing. They make the gift bags at home and then deliver them in person each holiday. For Kristin, nothing compares to the gift of giving.



SUPERFOODS TO THE RESCUE

by Dietitian Jenny Maloney

The buzzword gets thrown around a lot, but what does it really mean to be a “superfood?” Superfoods are nutrient dense and can help promote health and well-being. Just to be clear, there is no one or two foods that will promise you long-term health, but adding superfoods into your daily intake can get you to your goal quicker. Like changing up your exercise routine, changing up your food routine is a great kickstart.

Here are 10 (of the many) super foods to try:

- 1 **Berries** like blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, and blackberries are high in antioxidants, which help fight disease and inflammation.
- 2 **Nuts** like raw Brazil nuts, pistachios, almonds, and cashews are a great source of fat and have a variety of vitamins and minerals.
- 3 **Seeds** like raw pumpkin, sunflower, chia, and hemp seeds are great sources of fat, vitamins and minerals.
- 4 **Ancient grains** like quinoa (but don't stop there—there are so many other options!), farro, amaranth, millet, and oats will add fiber, protein, and B vitamins to your diet.
- 5 **Coconut** has saturated fat so don't overdo it, but its positives outweigh the negatives. You can use coconut oil to cook foods at a higher heat, coconut milk (unsweetened and unprocessed) can make a delicious chia seed pudding, and coconut water after a workout will help replace electrolytes.
- 6 **Avocado** is a great source of good fat and fiber.
- 7 **Omega 3 fatty acids**, found in salmon, walnuts and hemp seeds, help with brain health, heart health, and lowering inflammation.
- 8 **Fermented foods** such as yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, tempeh, and kimchi support gut health.
- 9 **Herbs and spices** like turmeric, ginger, and garlic are great for lowering inflammation and promoting gut health. Herbs and spices will also add more flavor to your food without adding salt to your diet.
- 10 **A variety of vegetables** should be eaten daily. I know, this is probably obvious, but we still aren't eating enough vegetables! The USDA recommends 5 to 7 servings (1/2 cup cooked or a full cup raw equals a serving) of veggies per day. Try to incorporate leafy greens and cruciferous veggies, like brussels sprouts and cauliflower, into your daily intake because they have been shown to help fight disease and inflammation. Vegetables also help fill you up so you're less tempted to eat foods with empty calories.



Questions about nutrition?

Ask Jenny Maloney,
Midtown's Registered Dietitian/Trainer
jenny.maloney@midtown.com
773.687.7571

ON THE HORIZON

with Midtown
President

**Jon
Brady**

"Our core purpose at Midtown is to inspire people to transform their lives."



SPIRIT: At its core, Midtown was built on tennis, and we are thought of as tennis innovators. Where do you see opportunities for growth in this sport?

JON BRADY: I'm so excited about tennis. Since we opened in 1970, we've taught more people to play tennis than anyone else in the world. Now we are at a point where we need to look at how we deliver tennis as a sport, as a program, and as an activity. We also need to look at how people are consuming physical activity and sports, and see if what we're doing will attract more people to the game. With something new, there's an inherent fear or obstacle and we have to break that down. People who are already invested in tennis understand the sport and the nuances of how it's played, but people who might be tennis curious aren't sure what they need to do or how to get started. It's also important to focus on the benefits of tennis over just lifting some weights or running on a treadmill.

SPIRIT: What's the hardest workout you've ever done?

JB: The first one that comes to mind was at a fitness studio in New York City that actually branded itself as the toughest workout in New York. It was brutal. It left me lying on the turf. You

know when your arms and legs just literally collapse under you and you land on your stomach? That was definitely one of the hardest workouts. The other one was when I was playing semi professionally and trying to make it as a soccer player. We had a strength and conditioning coach come in during the preseason who was trying to prove we weren't as fit as we thought we were. That was pretty brutal as well.

SPIRIT: What's the most memorable feedback you've received about Midtown?

JB: Without really knowing who I am or what I do beyond understanding I'm from corporate, members come up to me and tell me, "You saved my life." I'm always curious to know how. In some cases, somebody literally had a heart attack at Midtown and we were able to keep them alive until paramedics arrived. Other times, they'll share stories of losing hundreds of pounds after being told by their doctor if they didn't do something they'd be risking their lives. Others tell me that somebody in their family died and they couldn't see a way out of their depression. Exercising with somebody in one of our classes really lifted them up and gave them a safe place to be. All of this makes what we do so valuable. It's great we help people who are athletic and healthy stay that way, but we also help a lot of people who are coming into this for the first time. It can help transform their lives and their families' lives and the lives of their communities and neighbors. That's the feedback I get that holds true to what we are, who we are, and why we do what we do.

SPIRIT: What further development do you see for mental health trends at Midtown?

JB: Yoga has been a growing phenomenon for the last 10 years. It has made meditation and mindfulness much more mainstream than it used to be. I think that is something that is going to continue. I think people are more aware of their sleep habits, and what sleep can do for you, as well as the effects of sleep, meditation, and mindfulness.

SPIRIT: How will the Hotel at Midtown shape the future of the Club?

JB: The Hotel at Midtown has been incredibly successful and it creates an environment. We're not a gym or a club; we're a resort. The hotel adds to that feeling, because it provides another service and another community. We bring in people for business

or pleasure. I think people who are members who live locally also see us as a destination and escape, particularly in the summer with the pool and the bar.

SPIRIT: What other companies do you admire?

JB: I think it's really easy to get caught up in the Silicon Valley workplace culture. I have friends who are in that culture and sometimes it's great and sometimes it's incredibly demanding.

As a workforce, I think we're starting to look for different things. It's moving away from offering a free breakfast, lunch and dinner, and a gym. Those perks sound like great incentives, but the intention is that we want you to stay here working all day and all night, so what originally was a positive can become a negative situation. The workplace culture is being redefined and moving

more towards embodying what you believe in. From what I know about it, Pixar is an example of a company that has created a great culture, because people believe in what they're doing. They believe in the products they're putting out and why they're doing it. That's what I think creates a great work culture, when people are doing it for the same reason and they can get behind the goals, the targets and the vision. Our core purpose at Midtown is to inspire people to transform their lives.

SPIRIT: In 50 years from now, what do you see being different at Midtown?

JB: Looking towards the future, it's important to talk to people about what technologies are being worked on. We can then look at how that will influence consumers and impact their expectations of us. For example, they're making a refrigerator that will stock itself with Amazon deliveries. Okay great, a robot will put things away for you, so what? Well, that sets the expectation for consumers that they don't have to think about those things. What does that freed up time get used for? How does that change their expectations of us and automation? In 50 years, I hope our core values are the same and we're able to deliver on a core purpose. How we deliver it may be different, and how we inspire and transform your life may be different, but the core for us is that human connection and community. ■

"Members come up to me and tell me, "You saved my life." "

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MIDTOWN MEMBERS + CO-FOUNDERS OF EQUILIBRIA



"Midtown embodies balance. A place to be physically active, mentally centered, professionally connected, and have fun with friends and family."

"At its core, CBD is also about balance so Midtown is the perfect environment in which to launch a premium wellness company."

What motivated you to join Midtown?

Bonnie: The facilities are beautiful and love the pools. I love the yoga studio—and the free childcare!

Coco: I picked up tennis again after 20 years off and I absolutely had to have a place to play all winter long. We love having this city respite where I can work out, work, relax, and have family time all in one gorgeous and highly functional space.

How did the two of you become business partners?

Bonnie: I have a background in the beauty and wellness industry and met Coco 10 years ago when she was starting her first company, Pretty Quick. When we ran into each other again here at Midtown she shared with me her idea of launching a premium CBD company. Being the wellness junkie that I am, I had to hear more and the connection was natural.

Coco: From L'Oreal in New York and Paris, to my first start up company, and now working with Bonnie to run Equilibria, my passion has always been creating solutions for women to access self-care.

How is Equilibria different from the thousands of other CBD brands?

Coco: *Exceptional quality.* This product is fully traceable from farm to home. Equilibria is part owner of the organic 1,100 acre farm in Colorado where the CBD is hand-harvested, never using fillers or isolates.

Bonnie: *For women, by women.* All product development and dosage support are focused exclusively on the female biochemistry.

Coco: *Personalization.* All women are unique, so their daily CBD routines should be also. Led by two on-staff pharmacists, Equilibria's Dosage Specialists guide women through specific CBD routines perfect for their individual body and health goals.

How do you fit time to exercise into your busy schedules?

Bonnie: Great question. Early morning Ignite 45 gets me a great workout—so I am in and out in the mornings.

Coco: I religiously book Cardio Tennis into my schedule. It's booked like a meeting and I return to work with a clear head, ready to take on the day's challenges.

Laura Granville

GROWING UP MIDTOWN

SPIRIT: What would you consider to be the most significant win in your tennis career?

LAURA GRANVILLE: Probably my most significant win was over Mary Pierce to reach the round of 16 at Wimbledon in 2002. I had been on

the WTA Tour for a year and, by beating her, I moved into the top 100 for the first time. After that, I was always able to get into the main draw of Grand Slams, and felt established as a WTA Tour player. It also helped my confidence a lot to beat a former idol and realize I could reach the later rounds of a Grand Slam.

SPIRIT: As a mom, and with your awesome history in our junior tennis program, do you see your kids following in your footsteps?

LG: My parents did an excellent job of introducing me to a variety of sports and noticing what I enjoyed the most. I plan

"I feel really lucky that I grew up in Chicago instead of living at a tennis academy for years. I was able to attend regular schools and be a normal kid. Tennis was a big part of my life, but not my whole life."

Photograph © 2019 Rhonda Holcomb | www.rhondahphoto.com



to do the same with my kids. Grace is already in the Explorers class at Midtown with Coach O and loves it, but, if she likes another sport more, that's fine. I'd like for them to at least learn to play tennis, because they can enjoy it for the rest of their lives.

SPIRIT: What is your most fond memory at Midtown?

LG: I have many fond memories of Midtown. I started playing at Midtown when I was four years old and played most days after school with my coach, John Trump, until I was 18. I played my



SPIRIT: You've been called "the most accomplished tennis player who has hit the fewest balls." What was it like growing up in Chicago, with rivals coming from

other climates and playing opportunities?

LG: Looking back, I feel really lucky that I grew up in Chicago instead of living at a tennis academy for years. I was able to attend regular schools and



be a normal kid. Tennis was a big part of my life, but not my whole life. Because it was hard to know my competitors were practicing a lot more than I was, I convinced my parents to let me accept an invitation from the USTA to train at its Key Biscayne facility my junior year in high school. I only stayed one year, however, because I realized I was losing the healthy life balance I had previously had. I never got burned out, because I was never forced to play six hours a day. Over the years, I met many other kids who were over tennis by their teens or college, because they had played too much as juniors.

SPIRIT: What are the most difficult aspects of being a Head Tennis Coach for Princeton?

LG: While there are many wonderful aspects to being a college tennis coach, one of the more difficult parts is telling players they won't be playing in the top 6 in singles or the top 3 teams in doubles. Most college teams have at least 8 to 10 players, so, unfortunately, not everyone can play every match. ■

first 10 and under tournament there at age seven on court 9. When I was nine, a team of Russian junior players including Anna Kournikova came to Midtown to play our junior players—that was very exciting! I also loved watching champions like Billie Jean King and John McEnroe practice on the Midtown courts.

"My parents did an excellent job of introducing me to a variety of sports and noticing what I enjoyed the most. I plan to do the same with my kids."

SPIRIT: What advice would you give to your younger self as you were gaining major success in tennis?

LG: The advice I would give to my younger self is to establish the best possible home training base when not traveling. It's hard to have a normal life when you travel 40 weeks a year, so having friends and family around you when you aren't on the road is very important.



EVENTS

ON FASHION SHOW

November 12, 2019

Fun night to view and learn about On running apparel and shoes in the Penthouse with our very own instructors as models.



Photographs by Alice Xaio



TENNIS ACHIEVEMENTS

Midtown hosts the

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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

TOM GULLIKSON



Tom Gullikson is a Midtown tennis coach. He was ranked as high as #3 in the world in men's doubles on the ATP tour, winning 16 doubles titles with brother Tim. He captained the US Men's Davis Cup team between 1994 and 1999, capturing the Davis Cup as captain in 1995.

MANAGE YOUR GAME BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER [Chapter 2]

Do you enjoy competition? If so, here's a few ideas on how to be most successful playing competitive matches. My last article focused on pre-match fundamentals. Today I'll coach you on what to do during and post-match.

On game day, you need to have a clear game plan. "Plan your play and play your plan." Know your strengths and impose your game and your competitive will on your opponent. Start a point with either a well-placed serve or good return. Gain advantage in the next two shots with aggressive play, finishing the point by forcing an error or hitting a winner. I worked with Andre Agassi at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. Leading up to the Olympics, Andre was not playing very well that summer. He was on a mission to win the gold medal. Prior to the tournament we talked about three things: run for every ball and compete for every point; keep your mind in the match no matter the score; and maintain your poise and composure no matter the situation. Andre ended up winning the men's singles gold medal.

You cannot control winning or losing. You can control your engagement, attitude, energy and effort. A common mistake made by players at all levels is playing too safe and waiting for your opponent to hand you the match. Pete Sampras, winner of 14 Grand Slams, told my late brother Tim and I during a practice session at Wimbledon, "I hate to lose but I'm not afraid to lose." The translation is that he played to win. Don't be afraid to go for it in the important moments and play to win!

Post-match is a time for honest self-reflection. Identify the reason you either won or lost a match. First, reflect on what you did well. Even in a losing effort you need to find some positives in your performance. Identify what let you down. Evaluate the four different aspects of your play: physical, technical, tactical, mental and competitive. Did you lose the match because you lost your fitness? Are there technical areas of your game that let you down? Did your opponent pick on one shot repeatedly? How were your tactics? Did you impose your strengths on your opponent? Did you expose your opponent's weaknesses? Finally, how did you compete? Were you strong mentally? Did you talk to yourself with positive words and encouragement? Follow up by putting together a game plan of how to get better moving forward. Incorporate your conclusions in future practice sessions.

A final thought: Devote 50% of your practice time to your strengths and making them better. When you step on the match court to compete you want to feel good about owning your best shots, not just renting them temporarily.

See you on the court,

Captain Gully



Photograph by Steve Scapardine www.scapardine.com

LAST LOOK



MIDTOWN MATTERS

We were proud to sponsor a holiday tree at Brookfield Zoo for their annual Holiday Lights. Sponsorship dollars directly benefit The Chicago Zoological Society with the care of animals, positively affecting our communities and sustaining our planet's limited resources. It wouldn't have been a Midtown tree without repurposing our favorite round "ornament:" tennis balls. Midtown associates came together to make the tree fit and festive. To our delight, a few days after the trees were decorated, we received a call from the Zoo security, reporting that even the police dogs from the K9 unit could not resist our decorations!



A man in a blue t-shirt and dark shorts is captured in mid-air, jumping over a wall of stacked concrete blocks. He is wearing teal running shoes. Behind his back is a large, thick, orange cushion. The background is a white brick wall. The overall scene is a creative metaphor for running on soft surfaces.

no

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