

VIJAY AMRITRAJ

- Indian Tennis champion

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Topics

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For over two decades, Vijay Amritraj was one of the most illustrious tennis players in India. He topped the Asian charts for 14 consecutive years. Known today for his exceptional commentary, Mr. Amritraj is one of the greatest tennis legends in the country. While most know him for his on-court action, not many know that Vijay has dabbled in some on-screen action as well.

He won accolades for his elegance on the tennis courts and his warm unassuming persona off it. He was, along with the Indian cricket team, the most watched, applauded, and critiqued sports personality in the 1970s and 80s.

Career

A sportsperson of great repute, he played his first grand prix event at the age of 17. He played at Wimbledon for 17 straight years, making it to the quarterfinals in 1973 and 1981. Mr. Amritraj was the captain of the Indian Davis Cup for much of the late 1970s and 1980s, leading India to the 1974 and 1987 finals. He has also been five-time President of the ATP Tour Players Council.

A multifaceted personality, some of Mr. Amritraj's best moments have been off the tennis court, as an actor, appearing with Roger Moore in the James Bond film, Octopussy and in Star Trek IV and being one of the judges at the Miss Universe Pageant. As Lead Anchor and Host of ESPN Star Sports for Wimbledon, US Open as well as PGA events, he is one of the most recognizable faces and figures in the world of sports.

His multimedia company, First Serve Entertainment deals with Asian-American Content and has helped Disney, Turner and ESPN enter the Indian Market.

Through his numerous acts of giving back like establishing the Britannia Amritraj tennis Academy to help deserving players and nurture young talent, or, his role as the UN Messenger of Peace, or carrying the Olympic Torch at Seoul, he has made an impact on the world around him, as well as become a symbol of India in the International world. He has even founded The Vijay Amritraj Foundation, to bring hope, help and healing to the defenceless and innocent victims of natural and manmade calamities in India. Today, many noteworthy persons are associated with the Foundation, including World leaders, Statesmen, Business Leaders, and Philanthropists; among them, George H. W. Bush Former President of the United States, Mr Reddy, S Jay Reddy Chairman & CEO of the CORBISCO Group, Dr Shashi Tharoor Former Under Secretary General of the United Nations, and General the Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank Chief of the Defence Staff of the United Kingdom during the Blair Administration.

Awards

He is the only Indian to have received the Baron Pierre de Coubertin Award. He is also the recipient of the Padma Shri Award from the Government of India.

