



Press Release

September 10, 2013

CONTACT: Estella Espinosa
Work: (832) 395-7022
Cell: (832) 465-4782
estella.espinosa@houstontx.gov

The Friends of the Lee LeClear Tennis Center, Inc., Kick Off a \$5 Million Dollar Fundraising Campaign *Renovation of 40 Year Old Center Goal of New Friends Group*

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department is happy to announce the newly created Friends of the Lee LeClear Tennis Center, Inc., has begun a \$5.4 million fundraising campaign to renovate the 40-year-old Lee LeClear Tennis Center (9506 S. Gessner).

"We are thankful to the Friends of the Lee LeClear Tennis Center for their dedication to the center and for their fundraising efforts," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "The center was built in 1972 and has seen many games played on its courts. Thanks to the efforts of the Friends of Lee LeClear Tennis Center, we hope that it will continue to serve the needs of tennis enthusiasts for many years to come."

Originally named the Southwest Tennis Center, it was renamed the Lee LeClear Tennis Center in 1995 in honor of Lee LeClear, the longtime tennis pro who served as the manager and head tennis pro at the center for 20 years. It is located in Council District J and serves southwest Houston.

"I'm extremely grateful and very proud that Mrs. LeClear is working to raise private funds to refurbish the tennis center," said Mike Laster, Council Member, District J. "Its renovation will provide an ongoing tribute to the legacy of her husband Lee's life work. The tennis center holds a special place in the heart of Houston's tennis community. As such it deserves all the love, care and attention we can give it. The re-vitalization of the Lee LeClear Tennis Center is a dream come true and will be a great asset to District J and to Houston for generations to come."

In 2012, Lee LeClear was inducted into the Texas Tennis Museum and Hall of Fame for his contributions to the game of tennis. He was born in Chicago and taught himself to play tennis when he was young. He devoted his life to the game of tennis and considered his

greatest accomplishment to be instilling the love of the game to those with whom he came in contact.

Patti LeClear is leading the fundraising efforts of the Friends of Lee LeClear Tennis Center.

“Lee made a career of helping people learn to love the game of tennis as much as he did,” she said. “He gave twenty years of his life making this center function as a great athletic facility, and it has continued to be a major asset to the Houston tennis community. Our goal is to make it a state of the art facility, where everyone can enjoy one of the world’s great sports in a world class environment.”

When fundraising is completed, the proposed renovation plans for the center include the demolition of the existing facility, including the clubhouse building, tennis courts, lighting, walkways, and plaza. The proposed new center includes a two-level building with an observation deck, new post-tension concrete courts and a practice wall, a center court seating and shade structure, walkways and entry plaza, site landscaping, irrigation, security cameras, furnishings, and a drop off zone.

The Friends of Lee LeClear Tennis Center are working in conjunction with the Houston Parks Board on their fundraising campaign. Information on the campaign can be found on the Houston Parks Board website, www.houstonparksboard.org, under the Lee LeClear Tennis Center project tab.

About the Friends of Lee LeClear Tennis Center, Inc.

The Friends of the Lee LeClear Tennis Center, Inc. is a Texas Non-Profit Corporation that was formed to raise funds to renovate the current Lee LeClear Tennis Center located in Houston, Texas.

About the Houston Parks Board

The Houston Parks Board, a non-profit organization founded in 1976, is funded primarily by the generous donations of private donors, including individuals, families, neighborhood groups, foundations and corporations. During its 35-year history, the Houston Parks Board has acquired and improved over 75 per cent of Houston’s parkland, expanding the city’s park space by over 13,000 acres and making over \$75 million in capital improvements. The Parks Board works closely with Houston’s Mayor and the city’s Parks and Recreation Department in fulfilling its mission to create, improve, protect and advocate for parkland in the Greater Houston region.

About the Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,832 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.