

John Fitzgerald

SCHOLARSHIP LAUNCHED



Evonne Goolagong-Cawley and Peter Quinn with the first recipients of the John Fitzgerald Scholarship, Lorenzo Alforque and Briony McKenzie.

members had been anxious to find a way to honour his memory.

The result is the John Fitzgerald Kooyong Scholarship for junior players, to provide them with the opportunity to join the club, to improve their game with our coaches, and, hopefully, to advance to greater things in the world of tennis.

Young girls and boys will be awarded scholarships each year, offering membership, coaching and some assistance with expenses for attending tournaments etc. This is not meant to replace or replicate the Tennis Australia junior schemes but to make a Kooyong contribution to deserving youngsters.

As part of the Clubhouse renovation, a special area will be set aside to display information about the scholarships and the man whose name they carry.

Evonne, who had delighted the luncheon guests with her candid and entertaining tales of life on the tennis circuit, presented Kooyong tracksuits to two of the first scholarship winners.

Special guests of the club on the day were members of John Fitzgerald's family: his widow, Arline, his daughters Kate Dawson and Louise Hill, their husbands, Peter Dawson and Murray Hill, and the three Fitzgerald grandchildren, Matilda Dawson and Phoebe and Georgia Hill.



Foundation President, Peter Quinn, with John Fitzgerald's widow, Arline, and daughters Kate Dawson and Louise Hill.

One of the Club's favourite personalities, Evonne Goolagong Cawley, was on hand to help launch the John Fitzgerald Kooyong Scholarships at lunch on the final day of the AAMI Classic in January.

Kooyong Foundation Chairman, Peter Quinn, told a packed house that the scholarships were being introduced to honour club stalwart John Fitzgerald, who died in October, 2007.

"Kooyong has had many outstanding members throughout its history," Peter explained. "Some were champion players. John Fitzgerald was simply a champion bloke.

"Whether you were a member of his family, a work colleague, a partner or opponent on the tennis court, or simply someone who enjoyed his company over a drink or a meal in the clubhouse, you could count yourself a very lucky person."

During more than 50 years as a club member, Fitzzy, as he was known to all, never sought any limelight but was a tireless worker behind the scenes.

"He was the man standing on the sidelines offering advice and help -- and hard work -- whenever the Club or the President had a problem," Peter Quinn explained. "On the court he was a fierce competitor, but full of good humour and much loved by his playing mates."

John Fitzgerald was a leading newspaperman in Melbourne for many years, including several years as Editor of The Herald, then switched to public relations where he became well known for his wide range of contacts and skills at sorting out problems.

As Peter Quinn put it: "John left behind a legacy of achievements in the newspaper industry, in public relations, in raising huge amounts of money for charity, in working with our Olympic teams and our various bids to host the Games, in the America's Cup challenges. You name it, Fitzzy was there.

"He was there when we won the America's Cup and he was there many years later to watch our challenger go to the bottom of the ocean! Of course, being an un-reformed news reporter, Fitzzy was straight on the phone when he saw the yacht break in half and start to sink beneath the waves.

"In his distinguished newspaper career he was the courageous and crusading editor of The Herald, who defied legal threats to publish news of the notorious Khemlani Loans Affair. He also took personal risks when he ran articles linking the Mafia with drug-dealing in Australia."

Peter pointed out that John Fitzgerald had been one of the key movers in establishing the Kooyong Foundation and, after his death, Foundation