

KIRK, Jerry L., 67, of Atlanta, passed away unexpectedly Dec. 19, 2011, at his home. Born in N.C., Jerry grew up in S. Fla. and graduated from N. Miami High School, where he excelled in mathematics and became a competitive, self-taught tennis player. Jerry graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1966 with a degree in electrical engineering and received his Master's degree in mathematics from Georgia State University. A walk-on tennis player at Georgia Tech, he was soon awarded a full athletic scholarship by then Athletic Director Bobby Dodd. Throughout his life, Jerry remained very close to his fellow team members of Georgia Tech's tennis team—George Dickinson, Wally Johnson, Mike Lightborn and Bill Mallory.

During the course of his career, Jerry worked at Lockheed and Georgia Power, taught mathematics and coached tennis at Gainesville Junior College, where he led the team to win the state junior college title. He was the summer tennis professional at Atlanta's Capital City Club and later became tennis director of the City of Atlanta, managing Bitsy Grant, Piedmont Park and Chastain tennis centers during the tennis boom of the 1970s. He later worked in residential real estate construction and then with Pittard Machine Company, where he became a pioneer in programming computer-controlled machines. Jerry then transitioned to real estate investing so he would have more time to pursue his true love of competing at the top level of senior tennis and spending more time with his friends.

Jerry reached the highest levels in senior tennis, particularly as a doubles player. Among his many titles, Jerry won a world doubles championship and several national doubles titles. He and Hugh Thomson were the number one ranked doubles team in the nation on three occasions and the number one doubles team in the South at least six times. Jerry also played on numerous national championship USTA Intersectional Southern teams and Southern championship Georgia Senior Cup teams.

He was preceded in death by his loving mother, Fran Kirk. He is survived by his adoring sister, Dara Vega, of Miami, Fla.

Everyone who met Jerry just liked him. He will be sorely missed but not forgotten by all his friends on the senior circuit, particularly his long time doubles partner, Hugh Thomson; his good friend, Jim Purdy; the Tuesday night tennis gang, Bailey, Barry, Berke, Bill, Dick, Ed, Ernie, George, Goo, Skog, Wagener and Wally; all his buddies at the Bitsy Grant Tennis Center; and many national and international tennis players and organizations.

A memorial service will be held in Kellett Chapel at Peachtree Presbyterian Church on Jan. 12, 2012, at 1 p.m. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Jerry Kirk Memorial Fund, at the Bank of North Georgia, P.O. Box 1407, Alpharetta, Georgia 30009.

Jerry will also be remembered with a special memorial in early May during the Atlanta Senior Invitational tournament.