

Antigone "Andy" Simpson inspired many with her love of tennis, Alton sports and community

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – When it comes to the sport of tennis in the River Bend area, one name stands out above all others:

The Simpson family.

The legacies left by **Dr. Raymond (Bud) Simpson and Dr. Robert Simpson** in the tennis community still live on in many ways – from the **Bud and Robert Simpson Memorial Junior Tennis Program** in the Alton area, to the **Simpson Tennis Center** at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey to the **Bud Simpson Open** tennis tournament, the 34th edition of which took place this past weekend at the LCCC courts and at Alton High School's courts.

Bud Simpson's wife, Antigone – better known as Andy – was as much a part of the Simpson family and their support of tennis in the Alton area as anyone. She could be regularly found near the courts during the Simpson Open, supporting all the players who took part with a kind word as the tournament went on; she also was a regular at Alton High's basketball games, sitting behind the Redbird bench with her sister to support the Redbirds through thick and thin at both West Junior High when AHS played there and at Redbird Gym when the current school opened on Humbert Road.

Andy Simpson died Sunday night, about three hours after the tournament that bears her husband's name came to a conclusion, at Godfrey Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center in Godfrey, aged 92. Visitation will take place from 9-11 a.m. Saturday, followed by funeral services at St. Paul Episcopal Church, 10 E. Third Street, Alton. Elias, Kallal and Schaaf Funeral Home in Alton is in charge of arrangements.

“Andy and her husband, Dr. Raymond 'Bud' Simpson, started a tradition of supporting and promoting tennis in the Alton area more than 60 years ago that has been continued by their children, grandchildren and those they have touched during that time,” said family friend Patty Morrissey. “Andy always had a kind word to say and her love of people – often manifested through her support of tennis players – was enjoyed by everyone in her presence.

“The Simpson Memorial Tennis Program (a program established to help develop the sport in the Riverbend area following Bud Simpson's death in 1982) mourns the passing of a wonderful friend and will accept the challenge of continuing the Simpson legacy of improving our community through tennis generosity.”

“She was amazing,” said former **Alton High tennis coach Jesse Macias**. “She and the family did a lot to promote tennis to kids throughout the area; the contribution they made to the game has been great. The courts at (LCCC and at Gordon Moore Park) have been great. The contributions they made, and the legacy they have, will not be forgotten.

“The impact they've made on tennis in the area will live on; it meant a lot to many people in the area.”

That Simpson and her sister were supporters of the AHS athletic program – their presence at Redbird basketball games was as much a part of the program as anything – mean much to Redbird athletes. “They wanted to be a part of the program,” Macias said. “She was a Redbird through and through and she was loved by everyone. The kids loved her and she was a part of the community.”

“I've admired them (the Simpson family) for a long time,” said **Edwardsville tennis coach Dave Lipe**. “They've been the first family of Alton tennis for a long time. It wasn't just the support they gave tennis, it was the real love she gave the tennis community. I can still picture her coming out to the matches with boxes of PayDays and Baby Ruths and handing them out to the players.

“She was just a sweet woman. She was just a woman who loved the game; Alton and tennis lost a great friend in Andy Simpson and one that we should all celebrate and remember for as long as we can. She set a great example of how to live. She loved her family, she was loved by her family and she was loved by everyone.

“I still consider her very inspiring.”

For more information on the Simpson Memorial Tennis Program and to donate to the fund that is helping to repair the courts at Gordon Moore Park, visit www.simpsonstennis.org and Like the Simpson Memorial Tennis Program page at Facebook (www.facebook.com/SimpsonTennis)