

NEWS

Mauldin: There's Nothing White, Bourgeoisie About Tennis



By Jasmyne A. Cannick
Special to The Bulletin

While all of the other young men in his neighborhood were playing football and basketball, Le George Mauldin was at the tennis courts.

He was honing the skills that would eventually make him a master tennis instructor.

A native of Los Angeles, the 27-year-old Mauldin attended 42nd Street Elementary School, Audubon Middle School and Dorsey High School before eventually enrolling at Cal State University Dominguez Hills as a criminal justice major.

Reflecting on his childhood, Mauldin said he wasn't big enough for football or tall enough for basketball. For him, tennis just made sense.

"The game of tennis is similar to the game of life," said Mauldin, who has been playing since the age of 4. "It's a one-on-one sport where there's no one coaching you on the court

and you have to figure it out on your own. When your match is over is when you can get advice on what you did right and what you did wrong. But for the most part, it requires incredible self-discipline and self-control."

Mauldin is quick to credit his parents with teaching him the true meaning of life and hard work.

"My parents taught me that if you want something, it's up to you to get out there and bust your butt to make it happen," Mauldin said. "No one is going to hand anything to you. My parents are my role models."

In addition to his parents, Mauldin said he was fortunate enough to have strong, Black male role models, including his tennis coaches Terry Chambers and Richard Williams. He also credits his success to the late tennis champion Arthur Ashe and tennis greats Petros "Pete"

Sampras, Michael Chang and another Richard Williams — the father of Venus and Serena.

Mauldin, who trains with Venus and Serena, is currently a master tennis instructor to several rising stars at the Venus and Serena Tutorial/Tennis Academy located at L.A.'s Arthur Ashe Tennis Center. His goal is to help children, particularly Black children, hone their tennis skills.

"The Williams' are great people," he said. "While I was training in Florida, they graciously hosted me and my coach. They also give me great advice about tennis and on life in general."

Mauldin credits tennis with saving his life.

"Because I was on the court instead of in the streets, I escaped the life that so many young Black Brothers fall victim to — gangs, jail and teenage fatherhood," he said. "I made it a personal goal for

myself to teach as many children the game of tennis as possible in hopes of seeing them get a tennis scholarship to attend college and save their parents' money. I figure if they can get into college on a tennis scholarship, after about two years they might consider going pro."

But Mauldin also teaches adults to play tennis.

"Seeing an adult — or a child — hit their first tennis ball and it makes it over the net and stays in the court is a very rewarding feeling," Mauldin said. "As a tennis instructor, nothing can compare to being there to witness your student, whether they're children or adults, win their first match or tournament. That's what I enjoy most about teaching tennis."

Mauldin invites those who see tennis as a sport for Caucasians or members of the Black bourgeoisie to visit the Arthur Ashe Tennis Courts on a Saturday morning.

"We have adults, young adults and children — mostly Black — right here from South Los Angeles playing tennis," he said. "In addition, we have Blacks come from all over Southern California to play tennis at the Arthur Ashe Tennis Center because this is where most Blacks who play tennis play in L.A."

"There's a real sense of camaraderie and focus on helping anyone interested in learning how to play. There's nothing white or bourgeois about the game of tennis. During South Africa's apartheid, Arthur Ashe was denied a visa by the South African government, keeping

him out of the South African Open. He used the opportunity to call attention to South Africa's racism against Blacks. The Williams' sisters came straight out of Compton."

According to Mauldin, there is still a lot of racism in tennis.

"Just ask Venus and Serena," he said. "Black people need to realize that when we use terms like 'acting white' and 'bourgeoisie,' we discourage each other from reaching our full potential. It's no different than when kids tease each other with 'acting white' for being good students and bringing home A's on their report cards. Tennis is an opportunity, much like we view basketball and football for our youth, both females and males, to excel in life. Why should white children be the only ones taking advantage of that?"

His advice to aspiring tennis players?

"Stay focused and enjoy yourself," he said. "Always play the game of tennis with a smile on your face; it helps. There's nothing that you can't do with practice."

The Venus and Serena Tutorial/Tennis Academy, under the direction of Terry Chambers, is housed at the Arthur Ashe Tennis Center of L.A. at Rancho Cienega Sports Complex, located at 5001 Rodeo Blvd. in Los Angeles.

Private lessons are \$22 for 30 minutes or \$44 for one hour. Group lessons are also available. There are several master tennis instructors available for morning, afternoon and evening lessons. Call (323) 299-4631 to sign up.

City's Supply of Free Water Brooms Being Swept-up

Local businesses take advantage of water-, cost-saving devices

By Allison Jean Eaton
Bulletin Editor

COMPTON — The city has an answer for businesses and churches looking to save money on their monthly water bills and conserve water during one of the worst droughts in decades: For the past several weeks, the Compton Municipal Water Department has distributed free water brooms.

Water brooms use water- and labor-saving technology to provide many advantages over a hose or nozzle attachment when cleaning, according to city water officials.

Earlier this summer, the city obtained grants totaling nearly \$140,000 from the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) and Water Replenishment District (WRD). MWD provided roughly \$100,000, and WRD provided \$40,000, said water department Director Kambiz Shoghi.

With that money, the department purchased 606 Watermiser® water brooms. As of last week, it had distributed 515 to local businesses and churches.

The devices, which look like large push brooms on wheels, are lightweight, have rubber hand grips and come equipped with a row of tiny air and water jets that clean a floor with less effort and energy than sweeping or using a hose.

Shoghi said letters were sent to all area businesses in late June notifying them of the freebie.

On Aug. 8 and 15, representatives from those businesses and churches visited the city yard to pick up their free water brooms, which come complete with "Birthing a New Compton" decals.

The distribution is part of the department's water conservation and stewardship program. In the spirit of the mayor's rebirthing campaign, the brooms serve as an incentive to keep Compton clean.

"It's a way of saving water, and it cleans better, especially oily substances," Shoghi said. "You have more control. It's very efficient compared to a water hose, and it's easy to move around."

Considering the fact that the city intends to raise water rates in the near future, the offer becomes all the more attractive.

Compton's current water rates are some of the lowest in the county.

"For the last 20 years we haven't had any rate increases," Shoghi said. "Because our pipeline and underground facilities are really antiquated, and also to be in line with the mayor's wishes of birthing a new Compton, we have to raise prices."



Photo by Allison Jean Eaton

Martin Urquhart, a cross-connection specialist for the Compton Municipal Water District, illustrates the ease and efficiency with which a water broom can clean a surface.

replaced as soon as possible, Shoghi said. Additionally, most of the city's wells are 60 to 70 years old and working overtime to meet increased demand.

"We are lucky that a major event hasn't happened," he said. "The infrastructure is in very bad shape."

The exact amount of the

increase has yet to be determined, but the matter will come before the City Council once a consultant completes a rate study.

The department is currently seeking a grant to help fund the water-main replacement, Shoghi said.

Those interested in obtaining a water broom are urged to call the water department at (310) 605-5690 or (310) 605-5595. There are fewer than 100 water brooms left. Recipients must furnish a copy of a valid business license issued by the city.

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