



Novak Djokovic: Believe in Your Dreams

by Milos Rastovic

CINCINNATI, OH - Novak Djokovic became the first tennis player in history to win all nine ATP Masters 1000 Tournaments when in August he beat Roger Federer in the final match at the Western & Southern Open. During and after the final match the audience was cheering "Nole, Nole!" An echo of the long-desired win from the stadium passed like thunder to the homeland and other countries and continents where the Serbian Diaspora lives. Djokovic received a salve of greetings from his fans.



Novak Djokovic with his long-desired trophy in Cincinnati

After the final match, Djokovic expressed his feelings about the success. "Definitely one of the most special moments in my career. Achievements, making history of the sport that I truly love is a great privilege and honor and something that I'll be very proud of for the rest of my life."¹ Although Djokovic failed to win this tournament five times, he kept coming back. According to him, the trophy was a big motivation. He did not want to think about making history too much because he had "some failed attempts." His strong will and fighting spirit made him persistent, he never gave up his intention to win: "That's something

that I was hoping is going to happen again, and I believed that it will and it did. It was by far the best performance of the week."²

Djokovic won 70 ATP single titles including 13 Grand Slam single titles and 31 Masters Series 1000 titles. At the Press Conference, he said that he takes care of all his trophies: "Most of them are actually in Serbia. My parents, my father especially is very proud, and he keeps them -we have a tennis club in Belgrade and we have a little trophy room. So we keep it there."³

As a journalist for the *American Srbobran*, the oldest continuously published Serbian newspaper since 1906, I had a chance to meet with him again, and asked him a couple questions. Three years ago in Cincinnati, Djokovic became an honorary member of the Serb National Federation, the oldest Serbian Fraternal Society in the United States since 1901, which he remembered with a smile. Honorary presidents of the Serb National Federation are Mihajlo I. Pupin and Nikola Tesla, Serbian-American Scientists and Inventors, in 1929 and 1935. On behalf of the Serb National Federation, I presented him the books *Serb National Federation First 100 Years*, and *Serbian Americans*, by Dr. Krinka Vidakovic Petrov, in order to further introduce Serbian-American history, which is more than 200 years long. He delightedly accepted gifts. Although he was tired from all matches, he kindly responded to my questions.

After winning at Wimbledon and success in Cincinnati, how would you describe how your family supported you in a successful comeback to the tennis court?

"Family is the pillar of a society, life and development of each person. It is the same in my life and career. Without the support of my family, it would be difficult for me to compete on this high level of playing tennis. I am very grateful to God what I achieved as a husband and father of two kids, two angels who gave me a lot of energy, power, love, and additional motivation to compete on a



Novak Djokovic with his supporters



Serbian supporters of Novak at Central Stadium in Cincinnati



independent, self-supporting, and strong. Love, peace, happiness, and enjoyment are emotions and general postulates that we stand for every day. We are all people who learn from our mistakes. We should be sincere, just, and try to go through life with a smile."

As a bridge between the homeland and Serbian Diaspora, you reduce differences and distances between Serbs wherever they live either in the homeland or other countries and continents. What kind of emotions or knowledge do you take from your trips about the Serbian Diaspora and what would you like to see more in the common work of the homeland and Serbian Diaspora?

"Although I have family in Serbia, I feel I'm a member of the Serbian Diaspora. I have not lived in Serbia for a while. I meet many of our people who escaped from the homeland to America, Canada, and Australia during the war. These people are nostalgic and enjoy when they have a chance to see me, and other Serbian tennis players or athletes who



Novak Djokovic with SNF's Milos Rastovic and the gifts Milos delivered

play in their new country. That kind of love, support, and friendship, you can feel. It is nice to see that they are all together, and they perpetuate our culture and customs. I am convinced that better time is coming for all Serbs in the world and Serbia."

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JOKIC'S OFF SEASON HOME

Nikola Jokic, Serbian Basketball Player who currently plays for the NBA Denver Nuggets, spent summer in his hometown of Sombor, Serbia. After practice at the city swimming pool he shared time with his young supporters, from left, Nikola Stojanovic, Pavle Djenadija and Petar Djenadija, all from Sombor. "We look forward to getting more stories about Nikola Jokic, one of the most famous Serbian basketball players in the NBA," said Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator of the SNF, who is also a Sombor native.



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As an honorary member of the Serb National Federation, what message can you deliver to its members, especially young people such as students and all others who tirelessly work to preserve and perpetuate Serbian ethnic identity in the United States?

"Do not stop dreaming. Do not allow anybody to convince you that dreams are not real. Dreams are real because they create reality. Dreams motivate us. Be creative, inventive, and believe in yourself. You should believe that you can make your profile, life, and career which do not have to fit into the usual norms of the society. You can make anything in this world, if you believe and are dedicated to it. I love all of you and thanks for your support."

1 Western & Southern Open, August 19, 2018, Novak Djokovic, ASAP Sport: http://www.asapsports.com/show_interview.php?id=143044

2 Western & Southern Open, August 19, 2018, Novak Djokovic, ASAP Sport: http://www.asapsports.com/show_interview.php?id=143044

3 Western & Southern Open, August 19, 2018, Novak Djokovic, ASAP Sport: http://www.asapsports.com/show_interview.php?id=143044

LORAIN ACTIVITIES

by Darlene Zurich

The Slava and celebration for St. George Serbian Orthodox Church in Lorain, Ohio took place on a beautiful sunny day on April 22, 2018. The Holy Hierarchical Liturgy was officiated by His Grace, Bishop Irinej, together with several priests, deacons, a seminarian, and altar boys. Responses were sung by the voices of the church choir from St. Sava Cathedral in Parma, Ohio. Members of other Serbian churches also sang to honor our Bishop. During the services, our parish priest, Father Sinisa Hrvacevic, was elevated to the rank of Protonamesnik- Proto by His Grace, Bishop Irinej.

The Slava bread and zito were blessed and cut by His Grace, Bishop Irinej during the services with the kumovi, Michael and Darlene Zurich. Children assisted in turning the Slava kolach.

After the incredible Liturgy by our Bishop and talented choir members, all guests gathered in the church hall to enjoy a traditional Serbian meal. Live music was provided and softly played during the meal with the singing of Serbian songs.

As all guests were completing their meals, His Grace Bishop Irinej presented four parishioners with Gramatas, which are honors from the Bishop and Diocese for a lifetime of work done for the church. The honorees were: Mitchell Zurich, Nicholas Zurich, and Mitch and Mary Ann Radanovich.

Our church altar was renovated under the direction of Father Sinisa Hrvacevic. The new items arrived just in time for the Slava and were donated by generous church members. Father Sinisa together with his family has moved to Srem in Serbia to continue his pastoral mission. We wish him and his family many blessings.

Our tiny church has hosted Lenten meals, holiday meals, and installed a lift chair from the floor of the hall up the 20 steps to the vestibule of the church. What a blessing for many. We are currently remodeling and upgrading our parish home to welcome our new priest: Father Nektarije Tesanovich. In addition the ladies of the Kolo are planning their annual Slava in November. We are a tiny church but always active.

