

2017 OKECHI WOMEODU SCHOLAR ATHLETE GRANT

June 2, 1988 – November 10, 2004

About Okechi Womeodu

Anthony Okechi Womeodu was much more than a great tennis player, he was a son, nephew, brother, friend, and academic scholar with a very bright future. He was described by many as having a million dollar smile, “that launched a thousand friendships.” Okechi won a USTA national title at the age of 12.

Okechi, as he was fondly called, lived up to the meaning of his name during his 16 years – “God’s Gift”. He was a gift to his family and to the many lives he touched all around the country. He excelled as a student, participating in honors programs at all grade levels. At the time of his death he was a junior in the optional honors program at White Station High School in Memphis. His high school principal, Dr. Wanda Winnette, said “He was an all-around nice guy. I wish I had 1,000 more like him.” After graduation he planned to attend Stanford University. Years before when Okechi won the United States Tennis Association Boy’s 12s National Tennis Tournament in Alameda, CA he had an opportunity to visit the campus. He met Dick Gould, the tennis coach and played at the tennis club. He remarked then that he planned to return to Stanford one day as one of the top 3 men’s tennis players.

Okechi was blessed with incredible athletic abilities and had the demeanor of a champion on and off the court and fields. He was your ultimate sportsman and loved all sports, but the two that he focused on were tennis and soccer. His high school ring had a soccer ball for the stone and tennis rackets on the side. He was a United States Tennis Association nationally ranked tennis player at all age levels. One of the highlights of his junior tennis career was his participation in the Junior U.S. Open in New York City in 2004. Also in 2004, he was the singles and doubles winner at the Southern Open Championships, and made it to the finals of the ITF Chanda Rubin Junior Circuit in South Carolina with his doubles partner Jeff Dadamo.

He was a fierce competitor who remained humble and respectful of his opponents despite his achievements. Okechi had a wonderful engaging personality and smile. He made a point to reach out to younger athletes and was eager to hit a few balls with novice tennis players or share some soccer skills. The world of sports provided an opportunity to meet and develop friendships with peers of diverse racial-ethnic and geographic backgrounds. Okechi valued these friendships and many of his peers have found unique ways to honor his memory and pay tribute to the wonderful champion they loved. Okechi was wise beyond his years and illustrated that young people can teach all of us a lot about how to approach life.

He was as focused in the classroom as he was on the court. An eleventh grade honor student, member of the Junior National Honor Society and the Beta Club. Tragically, in November 2004, Okechi collapsed due to heart failure while playing an indoor soccer game. He was only 16 years old. This Scholar Athlete Grant that bears his name is a way to honor not only his talent off the court, but his determination in the classroom, and generosity to those who shared his same dreams and visions.

2017 OKECHI WOMEODU SCHOLAR ATHLETE GRANT Objectives and Requirements

OBJECTIVES:

1. Honor the memory, life, and achievements of this exceptional young man, who otherwise would have had a very promising future, on and off the court.
2. Reward tennis players who work to excel as much in the classroom as in sports.
3. Widen the net of opportunities to young players who aspire to excellence in competitive tennis.
4. Assure the careful nurturing of young players who may be candidates for USTA Player Development Programs.
5. Demonstrate the USTA resolve and commitment to diversity and inclusion in tennis.

REQUIREMENTS:

- For consideration the player must be:
 1. A United States Citizen
 2. An African-American male
 3. Between the ages of 12-18 years old
- The applicant must have a **grade point average of 3.0** or higher.
- One copy of **official high school transcript** (or home school transcript) is required.
- One Letter of Recommendation about the applicant's leadership ability is required.
- A recent photograph of the applicant is required.
- The applicant must submit a brief, type-written essay stating how they embody the tenacity, courage, and leadership qualities demonstrated by Okechi Womeodu.

ONE GRANT WILL BE AWARDED per year in the amount of \$750, for training expenses*.

*Training expenses include, but are not limited to, developmental training, coaching, facility usage, equipment, apparel, supplies, travel and room/board.

**2017 OKECHI WOMEODU SCHOLAR ATHLETE GRANT
Application**

CONFIDENTIAL (To be completed by parents if under 18)

First Name: _____ **Last Name:** _____ **Age:** _____
Address: _____ **City:** _____ **ST:** _____ **Zip:** _____
Cell Phone :(_____) _____ **E-mail Address*:** _____
Date of Birth: _____ **(MM/DD/YY) USTA Section:** _____
Current Grade Point Average: _____
Male _____ **Female** _____

Race/Ethnicity

African-American/Black (Not Hispanic or Latino): _____

Identified by two or more races: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian #1: _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **ST:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Cell Phone :(_____) _____ **E-mail Address*:** _____

Parent/Legal Guardian #2: _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **ST:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Cell Phone :(_____) _____ **E-mail Address*:** _____

Personal Coach (if any): _____ **Academy:** _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **ST:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Cell Phone :(_____) _____ **E-mail Address*:** _____

Please note:

- Email addresses shall not be used for any other purpose unless we receive consent from the applicant or from his/her legal guardian.
- Decisions will be announced in March 2017.

2017 OKECHI WOMEODU SCHOLAR ATHLETE GRANT
Supporting Documents and Signature

SUPPORTING:

1. A completed W-9 form with the **applicant's** current address and Social Security number must be included with the application.
2. A brief, type-written essay, explaining how you embody the tenacity, courage, and leadership qualities of Okechi Womeodu.
3. A copy of your high school transcript. Transcript copies must include school, school's address, school's phone number, official letterhead or emblem of the school, information key defining school's grading system).
4. ONE (1) Letter of Recommendation commenting on your **leadership ability** from any of the following:
 - a. High school principal
 - b. High school guidance counselor
 - c. High school teacher of a core academic class (gym/ art/ music teachers are not included)
 - d. Part-time job employer
 - e. City, county, or state elected official
 - f. Religious leader
 - g. Community leader (non-relative)

***APPLICATIONS MISSING ANY OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED ATTACHMENTS WILL BE IMMEDIATELY DISQUALIFIED AND WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**

SIGNATURE:

I hereby certify that the information submitted above is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that all information is subject to verification by the USTA Diversity & Inclusion Department as a condition of awarding funds.

Applicant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Legal Guardian #1 Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Legal Guardian #2 Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please scan and email **ONE COPY** of the application along with the essay and supporting documents no later than **January 20, 2017** to:

Essay_G.p8twj pz83cv7db8m@u.box.com