

**ALTHEA
LOUISE BROUGH
CLAPP
1923-2014**



**QUIET
BUT
INTENSE
TENNIS**

Though softly spoken, Louise Brough was one of the most dominant female tennis players after World War II. Her powerful serve-and-volley game propelled her to 35 Grand Slam championships and made her one of greatest doubles players in history. When she stepped onto a tennis court, she was like a General heading into battle. That attitude led Brough to earn the fifth most major championships in history.

Althea Louise Brough was born in Oklahoma City in March 1923. When she was four, her parents divorced. She and her mother moved to Southern California. By the time she entered college, she had won three national junior championships. In her first appearance at US Nationals, she reached the singles final – and won both the doubles and mixed doubles titles.

Her doubles partnership with longtime friend Margaret duPont placed her in rarified air as a dominant major champion. They won twenty Grand Slam women’s doubles titles, including nine US Open titles from 1942 to 1950, the longest consecutive title run in any major. They won twelve of the fourteen years they entered the US Open.

In singles, Brough loved Wimbledon, where the grass rewarded her outstanding volleys and the quiet reverence of the crowds matched her reserved personality. She won four major singles titles at the All England Club from 1948 to 1950 and 1955. During the “Brough decade” (1947-1955), she appeared in 21 of thirty finals in singles, doubles, and mixed doubles. In 1950, she won the rare triple of winning all three.

Brough won the US Open title in 1947, and was runner-up five times. She only appeared in the 1950 Australian Open, winning both singles and doubles. Although reaching the French Open semifinals three times, she never won a title on the slow clay. She won doubles titles there in 1946, 1947, and 1949.

Louise Brough was ranked in the Top Four from 1946 through 1957 (except for 1951 due to injury), and spent 91 weeks at #1. One of Brough’s most memorable matches was in the 1950 US Open, when she faced Althea Gibson, whom she vigorously supported to earn entrance into the event. Gibson lost that day, but it began Gibson’s rise to stardom.

Brough missed most of 1951 with a tennis elbow. When she returned, her service toss had abandoned her and her confidence never fully recovered. In addition, Maureen Connolly was dominating the sport. Brough was one of only four women to defeat the baseline bomber during her prime.

Brough married Pasadena dentist Dr. Alan Clapp in August 1958 and retired from tennis. She taught juniors for the next twenty years. She died in Vista, California in February 2014 at age 90. To this day she is remembered for being one of the greatest volleyers in tennis history. As doubles players, Brough and duPont were unequaled. Their nine consecutive titles will likely never be beaten. Appropriately, the two great friends were inducted together into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1967.