Name: _____ Date: _____

BILLIE JEAN KING



Read the biographical passage about Billie Jean King and answer the questions.

Billie Jean King is not only an iconic figure in the world of tennis but also a pioneering advocate for gender equality and social justice. Born in Long Beach, California, in 1943, King's passion for tennis was evident from a young age. Her skill on the court led her to win an astounding 39 Grand Slam titles, including 12 in singles, 16 in women's doubles, and 11 in mixed doubles.

Beyond her remarkable achievements in tennis, Billie Jean King's legacy is profoundly tied to her advocacy for gender equality in sports and beyond. Perhaps her most famous contribution to this cause was her victory in the 1973 "Battle of the Sexes" match against Bobby Riggs, a former Wimbledon champion who claimed that women's tennis was inferior to men's. The match, watched by millions worldwide, wasn't just a victory for King but a monumental moment in the public recognition of women's sports and the push for equal pay and treatment.

King's activism extended off the court as well. She was a key figure in the establishment of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), which sought to improve the pay and conditions for female tennis players. Her efforts were crucial in ensuring that women athletes received comparable prize money to their male counterparts, a battle that continues in many sports today.

In addition to her work with the WTA, Billie Jean King played a significant role in the passage of Title IX, a federal civil rights law that prohibits gender discrimination in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. This law has been instrumental in increasing opportunities and funding for women in sports at the collegiate level and beyond.

King's contributions to tennis and equality have been widely recognized; she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 for her advocacy work. Her life and career continue to inspire not only athletes but anyone fighting for justice and equality.

Use the image

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 How did the "Battle of the Sexes" match contribute to the movement for gender equality in sports?

2 In what ways did Billie Jean King advocate for women's rights off the tennis court?

3 Why is Title IX significant, and how does it relate to Billie Jean King's legacy?

Use the Village