

Tennis champ is passionate

Being inducted into the N.C. Tennis Hall of Fame two years ago didn't give Susan Love a reason to settle down and reflect on her past success.

It sparked a fire in her and gave her cause to "do a little more and get back into the game" she said.

To that point, she had won 37 N.C. titles in singles, doubles and mixed doubles and seven Southern Sectional titles, and she had reached the national finals three times, winning once in doubles.

After that recommitment, she went on a tear.



Love reached the age-group finals in singles of the U.S. Tennis Association National Clay Court and the USTA National Indoor Championships in 2006 and was voted N.C. female player of the year by USTA North Carolina.

In April, she represented the U.S. at the Seniors World Team Championships in Antalya, Turkey, and took home a bronze medal. Then on May 20, she won the national singles indoor title in Chicago.

"The past few years have just been a true blessing to me," said Love, 46. Since her Hall of Fame induction, she has added seven more N.C. titles and one Southern Sectional title and reached three more national finals, winning two.

"I've always wanted to do this, but I guess now is the time. It's all coming together."

She said representing the U.S. was an "honor and a privilege" and that it "was a big thrill to be wearing the USA uniform."

"The neatest thing was when they had the award ceremonies, they said Susan Love, Untied Sate of America. That gave me chills. ... It wasn't Susan Love, Charlotte, North Carolina, it was Susan Love, United States of America."

Love grew up in Huntington, W.Va., where she began playing tennis at age 11, then played on a tennis scholarship at Appalachian State in 1979-1983 and moved to Charlotte, where she's lived ever since.

She said the support from her family -- husband Mike, sons Christopher, 13 and Carter, 11, and her mother, Chris Moore -- has been invaluable.

And the support from various groups and her faith in God have been key as well.

"My Bible study group prays for me, I have a trainer, the Olde Providence Racquet Club cheers me on, and I have great training partners."

"I just really give all the glory to God that he's blessed me with a healthy body and the talent to be competitive and opened doors of opportunity that I never knew were possible."

She said the success hasn't quenched the fire inside, but instead made her even more passionate about improving.

Up next for Love is the USTA National Women's Hard Court Championships in Salinas, Calif., Sept. 24-30.

"I've always had a dream to play against the top players in the world and here I am at 46 doing it. That's the thing about tennis, that you can live out your dream at 46."