Billie Jean King's status as one of the legendary figures of the twentieth century is virtually assured. One of the most effective leaders the sporting world has ever produced, her impact on world culture would be difficult to overstate. With unsurpassed skill, boundless energy, and irrepressible determination, she has dominated women's tennis, both on and off the court, for nearly two decades; in the process transforming the foundation of professional women's athletics forever.

A detailed account of Billie Jean King's center court accomplishments can drop your jaw to the floor. Her Wimbledon play is one of the most awesome achievements in all of sports. The owner of 6 singles and 14 doubles wins, Billie Jean's collection of 20 Wimbledon championships is unsurpassed. She's also battled her way to victory 13 times at the U.S. Open, capturing 5 singles crowns. She's scored singles victories at all Grand Slam events, was ranked number one in the world four times, was on top of the U.S. doubles list for a record 12 years, and in 1971, became the first female athlete to ever earn more than $100,000 in a single season— in any sport.

Over the years, Billie Jean has scraped and fought for thousands of victories, earning international respect as a consummate champion. But equally essential to the "Billie Jean persona" have been her courageous struggles to "make things happen" in the world that extends beyond center court.

Considering the staggering amounts of prize money earned by today's top tennis players, it's easy to forget that in the early sixties, when
Billie Jean King first appeared on the scene, that few men, and no women made a career of the sport. In 1966, the first year she was ranked number one in the world, Billie Jean cleared approximately $4,000 in winnings. Forced to play as "amateurs" under the guidelines of the United States Ladies Tennis Association (USTLA), even the cream of women's tennis were supported on the circuit by under the table payments. The hypocrisy of this arrangement (which came to be known as "shamateur" tennis) pushed Billie Jean into action. Publicly protesting the USTLA's shabby treatment of its members, she helped create a player's union that would promote women's tennis on its own merits, and not just as the feminine icing on the cake of men's competition. The fledgling organization was the Women's Tennis Association (WTA), and under Billie Jean's tireless and far-sighted guidance, it helped legitimate women's athletics and boosted the cause of economic and psychological equality for women throughout the world. In this regard, Billie Jean's most significant match wasn't even an official one. But her 1975 drubbing of self-avowed male chauvinist, Bobby Riggs in the so-called "Battle of the Sexes" qualifies as a milestone event in the history of athletic competition, and Billie Jean's involvement was no coincidence.

One of the most dynamic, and persuasive figures in contemporary American life, Billie Jean King continues to apply her leadership abilities and championship style to a broad range of athletic and business activities. Her ongoing association as spokesperson and corporate consultant with the Phillip Morris Company has resulted in
that company's extensive involvement and high visibility in women's tennis, and reflects their commitment to excellence. Billie Jean also continues to lend her inspirational guidance and executive expertise to the business aspect of athletics through her work with the WTA and the Women's Sports Foundation. She and her husband, Larry, are also heavily involved in Team Tennis, which has become a steadily growing enterprise in Southern California.

Outspoken, forthright, and unafraid, Billie Jean King has become a towering international symbol of determination and honesty, and brings to all her activities an automatic association with human achievement of the highest level.

ADD: Steady growth characterizes Billie Jean's career as a broadcaster as well, and her unique insights and irrepressible enthusiasm for the game of tennis make her one of the most delightful commentators in sports.