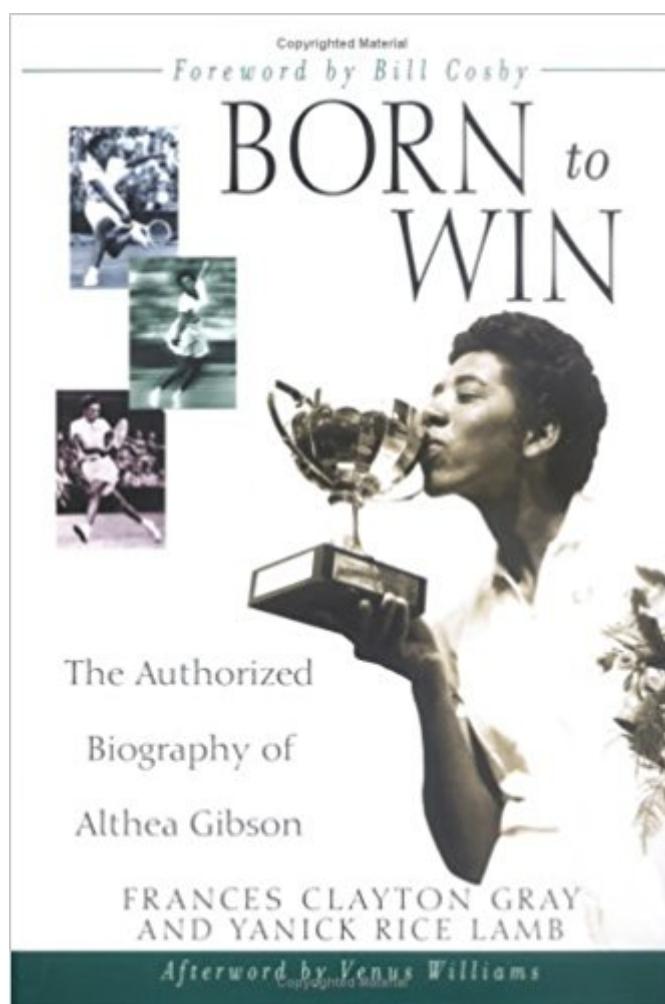


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# Born To Win: The Authorized Biography Of Althea Gibson



## **Synopsis**

On Althea Gibson, America's first African American tennis champion: "I am grateful to Althea Gibson for having the strength and courage to break through the racial barriers in tennis. She knocked down walls that gave us more freedom to concentrate on the game. . . . Althea's accomplishments set the stage for my success, but she also made a difference for people of all backgrounds in all areas. Through beneficiaries like me, Serena, and many others to come, her legacy will live on." -Venus Williams "She just meant so much to me. I've always felt connected to her and thankful and grateful for what she's done for people of color and me." -Billie Jean King "Althea built many bridges over her seventy-six years on this earth to ease our crossing. . . . She fought the good fight, she finished her course, she kept her faith, and she can rest-game, set, and match." -David Dinkins former mayor of New York City "It was the quiet dignity with which Althea carried herself during the turbulent days of the 1950s that was truly remarkable. . . . When she began playing, less than five percent of tennis newcomers were minorities. Today, some thirty percent are minorities, two-thirds of whom are African American. This is her legacy." -Alan Schwartz President, U.S. Tennis Association

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The first African-American woman to win both Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, Gibson (1927–2003) was one of the most gifted athletes, male or female, of the second half of the 20th century. Despite her talent, which reached its zenith in the 1950s and early '60s, little has been written about her, save for her own 1958 autobiography, long out of print. Unfortunately, this effort

from Gray, cofounder of the Althea Gibson Foundation, and journalist Lamb comes up short. While all the highlights of Gibson's rise—from the streets of Harlem to Wimbledon, from professional tennis to professional golf—are here, there's little insight into Gibson herself. This is particularly disappointing since Gray was a Gibson confidante who had the athlete's friends' and family's cooperation. Gray tends to gush about Gibson's many triumphs while largely overlooking her shortcomings. She even glosses over the difficult physical and financial situation Gibson faced during the 1990s after suffering a stroke, delivering a superficial look at this trailblazing woman. A more rounded and better written portrait of Gibson appears in Bruce Schoenfeld's *The Match: Althea Gibson & Angela Buxton: How Two Outsiders—One Black, the Other Jewish—Forged a Friendship and Made Sports History*, which Amistad published in June. 40 b&w photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Althea Gibson won both Wimbledon and the U.S. Open tennis titles in 1957 and 1958, achievements made all the more significant because, at that time, it was almost unknown for African Americans to compete in the sport. Gray, Gibson's longtime friend, relates a life filled with sporting excellence and personal struggles against racism. The compelling aspect of Gibson's battles as a black woman in a very white sport was the solitary nature of her crusade. Jackie Robinson had Branch Rickey, but none of Gibson's advocates possessed that level of personal clout or institutional leverage. Gray enumerates Gibson's journey through the sporting world, her money struggles, and her lack of endorsements. Gibson seldom took her frustrations public, internalizing them instead. In the years preceding her death in 2003 at 76, she was bitter and virtually penniless. Gray presents a balanced portrait of a life that had its storybook moments but was missing the happily-ever-after ending. Thought-provoking reading, especially for those who think the integration of sport was accomplished solely by Jackie Robinson. Wes LukowskyCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This was a library copy in excellent condition. The story is told in a historical content and with simplicity. It is an enjoyable journey into the life and times of one of the greatest female athletes of our generation. We owe a lot to Ms. Gibson and she should be given more recognition for her stellar accomplishments. Her place in tennis is comparable to Jackie Robinson's place in baseball. They were both firsts to break the color divide in their fields of sport.

I knew a little of the story of Althea Gibson, but I didn't know the entire story. She was the queen of tennis. I couldn't imagine not being able to play in a tennis tournament because of my skin color. I also couldn't imagine winning the highest honor in tennis, and not being recognized properly. Her story is transcending. She was a pioneer, and I recommend this book to anyone who wants to be a champion.

Enjoyed reading and remembering this great tennis player.

the book was delivered in very good condition. I enjoyed the story very much. People of color certainly have their challenges and unfortunately that will never end. Shame on us all.

very good

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