

POETRY ON AND OFF THE COURT

By JIM MARTZ

Todd Edwards wants to ask you the following: On or off the tennis court, if your life was a poem what would it say?

Todd Rubenstein wants to know what you'd like to improve in your tennis game, whether you're an advanced player or 10-and-under novice.

The two Todds are the same person.

Rubenstein is the director of competitive tennis at the historic Lauderdale Tennis Club. He has been a USPTA teaching pro for more than 20 years and was top ranked in the USTA 30's division.

Edwards, his pen name, is the creator of the branded writing style known as "Reality Rhyming." He writes personalized, framed poetry gifts based on the premise that if your life was a poem, what would it say?

He has created rhyming pieces for several celebrities, including Oprah Winfrey, Elton John, Ellen DeGeneres, Justin Timberlake, Martha Stewart, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, Regis Philbin, Dwayne Wayne, Kathie Lee Gifford, Maria Sharapova, James Blake, the Andy Roddick Foundation, and Howard Schniedlerberger, coach of the 1983 national college football champion Miami Hurricanes.

He also is the author of Amazon's number two best-selling advertising book "Standing Naked at 10 Below: Exposing Your Product in the Media."

Why the two last names?

"I like to separate the one from the other," Rubenstein said. "And for years, when I did acting and modeling, I went by Edwards, and based on that I kept that name."

Long-time followers of junior and high school tennis in Florida may recall that Rubenstein was part of a highly successful group of players coached by Steve Rajner at Peribrooke Lakes Tennis Center in Peribrooke Pines that included national champion Ivan Baron, Jason Raymond and Eric Greenfield. They were state high school champions for Cooper City in 1988 and Rubenstein won state No. 5 singles in 1987 and 1988.

"It's funny how everything has a domino effect," said Rubenstein. "I really loved to write. It was a way to vent and express yourself, and I did it through poetry."

"As you become older as a writer you write differently. One day I was getting ready to go to a baby shower for friends and wanted give a different gift that they would have forever. The baby's name was Isabella, and I created a story in rhyme, put it on paper and had it framed."

"Friends said, 'You ought do something with this.' I said, 'Whatever.' I did a couple of others with friends and started Kreativeworks. One thing led to another."

"From that I became my own PR person. I love the idea to create the pitch. My friends are like, 'Can you do this for me?'"

Rubenstein, or, Edwards, says he will write a story of rhyme for any occasion — wedding, graduation, birth of a child, fund raiser, celebrity roast, holiday, whatever.



Todd Edwards with Stacy Moss, whose daughter Marly is a special needs child. Edwards wrote a Reality Rhyme to raise money for Marly's Milestones foundation.

"But especially for the person who already has it all" he says on his website (www.realityrhyming.com). "Reality Rhyming is not only an enduring keepsake, but more importantly it's an empowering emotional experience which is an expression for a lifetime."

He does this by taking a person's name written downward (acrostic) and along with personalized information, writes a story of rhyme. Typically they are written on handmade paper in custom designed frames imported from Italy.

"It has been a lot of fun," said Edwards, who is based out of Hollywood, "a blast, all over the country to take my passion with the writing and do what I love. People in tennis get confused by the name, but that's the reality of it."

Once he was asked to do a rhyme about Justin Timberlake for a Shriners golf tournament.

"I couldn't let him know about it," Edwards said. "I talk to the people who create the rhyme and give it to the person, and if you want revisions I'll make changes until they're happy with it. He had no clue. It's an empowering experience."

Meanwhile, Rubenstein's own tennis hasn't been as overpowering as he would like.

"It's not going the way it should," he said. "I played in the ITF World Championships (in Palm Beach County) and lost in the quarterfinals of the back draw in the men's 40's. I've had an injury bug, but I want to play."

At the Lauderdale Tennis Club, under manager Dan DeBruyne, he creates and runs tournaments and works with members in clinics, private lessons and summer camps. And that's become poetry in motion.

An Ancient Zest For Life

M

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A

ways running circles with her tender, contagious smile, embracing an exquisite warmth shining true

R

elates us her brilliant colors, as they create vibrations that enlightening all who feel her gentle touch

L

ighting a pathway of fate on this April 2, 2011 toward her "Milestones" as it was pronounced as such

Y

autiful and amazing, with an endless zest for life, capturing and beautiful, as love will ever yours with

Todd's Reality Rhyming poem about Marly