



## Johnson Honored

Russ Diethrick (left) of the City Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department awards Len Johnson a plaque for playing 40 years in the City Rec. Tennis Tournament. Johnson has helped many with their tennis games over the years and could be considered "Mr. Tennis" in Jamestown.

# Johnson Honored For 40 Years Of Play In City Tennis Tourney

Time may have taken some speed off of Len Johnson's backhand passing shot, but four decades haven't slowed his service to the Jamestown tennis community.

Johnson marked his 40th year of competition in the annual City Rec. Department Tennis Tournament this summer, playing in both singles and

doubles events.

Actually, the tourney might be named the Len Johnson Open. He has captured the singles title 23 times, including an incredible 16 years in a row during the 1940s and 1950s.

But the winning skein was only part of the reason for a special award presented to Johnson by tournament directors Ross Parasiliti and Brett Johnson.

"Without Lenny, tennis might have faded in this area," said Brett Johnson.

City Rec. Director Russ Diethrick noted that the tribute on behalf of the youngsters Johnson has helped, emphasizes Len's tireless work on behalf of tennis locally.

Len remembers Jack Kench, former Southwestern star Terry Jern, Buffalo pro Karen Peterson and Dan Turnell as players who made their games known outside of Jamestown.

As owner of Len's Pro Shop, Johnson still watches and advises upcoming players who dream of being the next Bjorn Borg.

They could aspire instead to the fame of the genial Johnson, who was a finalist in the City Tournament as recently in 1979, when he was more than 40 years older than his opponent.

Even so, "You forget about the winning," Johnson said, glancing at a few of the trophies he displays. Some of them are nearly as tall as the young novices who buy their first rackets from him.

"If I bought anyone else along that has kept tennis alive," he said about his love affair with the game, "that's all that counts to me."