

Motto: Keep Moving

Born in Morocco in 1918, Victor Elmaleh came to this country with his parents in 1925. After he started school, they decided to leave him with his grandparents' family for an American education. In Brooklyn he attended P.S. 48, New Utrecht High and Brooklyn College. Later he transferred to the University of Virginia, where he studied architecture.

In November 1941, he met Sono Osato, who had for six years been with the original Ballet Russe, but was then with American Ballet Theatre. That proved to be the most important and significant event of his life. They were married in April 1943 and have been happily together ever since – almost 70 years. They have two sons; Niko and Antonio and three grandchildren; Sarah, Andrew and Alex.

“Sono has the best and purest character of anyone I've ever known so I feel I'm the luckiest guy in the world. Coincidentally, she was one of the most beautiful, elegant, lyrical and natural dancer-artists of her day. My real life commenced with our being together and everything that I've done since has happened with her loving partnership.”

Victor's life is divided into: business, sports, painting and music.

After the war in 1946, he “Americanized” his father's export business in Morocco by starting an import firm which consisted of his brother, Jacques, brother-in-law, Larry Craig and Arthur and Frank Stanton, and named it Craig-Stanton.

Sports have been a passion all of his life and he competed while in business. “Sports are one of the only areas in which individual talent can be really measured.”

Handball; Was the sport in his early years and he won

the National Doubles Championship in 1951.

Squash. In squash, he won the National Doubles Championship in 1968, when he was 49 and his partner was 23, and later the Age 50 Nationals. At 81, he won the Elmaleh Pro-Am, and at 92 he still plays a game designed to his lack of mobility. To promote squash doubles, he set up a program with U.S. Squash and contributed to build The Elmaleh/Stanton Squash Center in Southampton and one in Toronto.



Victor Elmaleh [Photo by Annie Watt]

Tennis. In tennis, he competed in Senior Doubles; won numerous tournaments including the Eastern Seniors and two others with Bobby Riggs. “Sadly, I gave up tennis in my 80's because my legs gave out.”

In 2001, Victor joined the Board of the Orchestra of St. Luke's and created an endowment. Ultimately, he found their new home at the Baryshnikov building. He serves on the board of Concert Artists Guild and established an annual competition for musicians.

He also created a fund for pianists at Rockefeller University and plans to arrange recordings for fifteen young pianists to help launch their careers.

As an alumnus of the University of Virginia (class of '42), he has been very involved with their plans for development which has resulted in the Elmaleh Wing of the School of Architecture and the Elmaleh Art Gallery.

For his dear Sono, he established an endowed gift at Career Transition For Dancers entitled The Sono Osato Scholarship Program for Graduate Studies.

“I go to the office every day and have no intention of retiring. As always, my motto is ‘Keep Moving.’”