

## Ontario Hall of Fame, May 4, 2011 Sam Young's Acceptance Speech

Thank you to the Hall of Fame Committee

Special thank you to Carolyn Smith. Nice to have my family here: Brooks and Nancy, Megan and Clark and my sister in law Virginia, My friends Michael and Catherine Durland, Brad Moulton, and Chet, Scott, Bill and Steve from my Huntington Days, Eva and Frank Kovacs, Judy and David Lawrence, Peter and Arlene Markle, Doug and Kody Fry And Laurie Buckland and Warren Crosbie two of Canada's consummate golf professionals and really nice people.

Why I am here?

My family emigrated from Scotland in 1948. My father played golf recreationally and took his turn maintaining the Tulliallen Golf Club in Kincardine, Scotland. Maintaining the golf course in those days meant he herded the sheep from one fairway to another. It didn't take my parents very long to get established and feel comfortable in Canada and they bought a new house six months after we arrived. Extra cash was scarce; however, my father was able to buy a used set of Spalding golf clubs for himself in the spring right after we bought the new house. The game was on. I started playing with my Dad's clubs in the schoolyard and actually became quite a repair man as the heads used to fly off regularly and I couldn't let him know I broke his clubs.



My mother, always looking to help the family finances, heard there was a golf course nearby that needed caddies and I found my way to Oakdale Golf Club to begin my caddy career. We learned a great deal caddying – we learned the game, etiquette, patience, quietness, endurance, but mostly we learned never to lose a member's golf ball. If you lost one on the front nine there was no caddy special at the half way house and if you lost one on the back nine there was no tip. Neither of those scenarios was appealing to a young Scotsman. I caddied at Oakdale throughout public school and for a year in high school. One of the best things about caddying at Oakdale was being able to play every Monday morning at 7:00am, usually with clubs loaned to me by a member.

The Summerlea Golf Club, now named Humber Valley and one of Metropolitan Toronto's five public courses, at the time allowed Juniors to play one day a week, all day, for 50 cents. Those were the days I "marathoned" for 54 holes. What a great place to learn. During high school, my electronics teacher, an avid golfer who spoke of golf many times during class, took us to Humber Valley ostensibly to check the wiring. Somehow we ended up playing golf. I dreamed of golf during my classes. However, my mother's dream was for me to be a bank manager - a position of high status in our native Scotland at the time. When I completed high school, she found me work as a trainee at a bank in Toronto. I had worked in the bank for four days when I got a call from my high school friend and was offered a position in the back shop at Oakdale. - Banking Career vs back shop - My mother didn't forgive me for 20 years.

When I arrived at Oakdale I found that this exceptional player named George Knudson was the playing professional. He had a bedroom in the back shop. Even though my friend and I lived 20 minutes from the club, we stayed overnight in the back shop too. George Knudson taught me and my friend at night in the Pro Shop. After our lessons, we hit balls under the light outside the Pro Shop off a coco mat – picking up the balls at 6:00am before the members arrived.

I was obsessed with the game. I had such a strong desire to improve that my friend and I planned to go to Florida for the winter to practice and play. When he backed out, I went to Florida with the Oakdale assistant. We left in a snowstorm - determined to go. My father told me not to go in the storm but we were young and fearless. After driving all day we pulled into a motel in Batavia NY - my father was right. Perhaps we were young and foolish but we had a passion for the game and nothing was stopping us.

We stayed at the Riviera Golf Club in Ormond Beach. There were four bedrooms above the clubhouse for which we paid the exorbitant price of \$30.00 per month for room and golf. Moe Norman occupied one of the rooms. I got along with Moe from the first day. I practiced beside him and played 36 holes a day with him almost every day. Moe taught me how to improve my work ethic. It took me 15 minutes to pick up my bag of wedge shots – it took Moe 5 minutes. I got the message.

When I returned from Florida, in late March of 1961, I got my first Assistant Professional job with Gord DeLaat at Weston. Gord structured my job to allow me time to practice or play 18 holes a day and 36 on my day off. In the spring and fall, the head pros and some tour pros from Toronto would play every Monday and Friday, frequently at Weston. That's where I first met Al Balding, Canada's leading tour player and first Canadian to win a US Tour event. I was impressed. Soon after, I was asking Al to watch me hit balls and almost every time he played Weston I asked him for help. He never turned me down.

George and Al had different philosophies about the golf swing and although I used George's teaching as my base, Al gave me all the other valuable information and helped me with my wedge play and putting, tempo, course management, and gave me so much other valuable information. The biggest help of all – he took an interest in me.

I did realize at the time that in the space of one calendar year, I had been taught by or played with three of Canada's finest playing professionals of all time. My improvement was remarkable. When I arrived at Oakdale I was a high seventies, and mostly, low eighties player. In the short space of one and a half seasons, I broke 70 and within three years, I had won an Assistants Championship, came second and third in two other Assistants tournaments and missed my US Tour card by three shots in the Canadian Bursary. I realized the priceless value of the lessons I had received from these three mentors. All that time was given to me. Payment for their expertise was never mentioned.

I have never forgotten what Al, Moe and George gave to me. I know that their generosity had a huge influence on me when it came time for me to give back to young golfers and to the game of golf. Their influence was a deciding factor on the course my career would take when severe arthritis ended my playing aspirations in 1967.

When playing for a living was no longer an option I returned to teaching and eventually back into the assistant's ranks in 1969 at Maple Downs followed by a six month teaching stint in the Bahamas the following winter. During that time in the Bahamas, I realized something was missing – I missed school.

It was during this time that my girlfriend, now my wife, and I decided that I should return to university as a mature student. The University of Guelph had a semester system which dovetailed nicely with the golf business. The time in University helped me appreciate the pursuit of knowledge and that is what I have been doing ever since and still doing to this day. Anything I can learn to help my students learn easier and play better is valuable to me.

Throughout my career I have always had a Junior Program. At my former club, Huntington we had 125 Juniors on an annual basis and during that same time period I taught three years at the GAO Junior Boys summer camps in Camp Borden and in the early eighties I hosted and taught the first two Ontario Junior Girls Summer Camps. During my Shelburne years I continued my Junior lessons and produced a few top players even though we drew from a small population base.

The big breakthrough at Shelburne came immediately after Tiger Woods win at the 1997 Masters. All three public schools in Shelburne phoned to ask if I could set up a program for their students. Coincidentally, the next year we built our practice facility and although, as I mentioned, we have a relatively small base from which to draw, the program flourished. The Junior Junior and Junior golf membership at Shelburne kept growing to the point that, in 2005, I had over 150 Junior and Junior-Junior members, all of whom I personally taught.

With so many kids participating a new need developed. As is the case at most golf courses, it is the father who introduces the kids to the game which meant that as the kids developed they would go out and play with their Dads. At my club, the mothers didn't want to be left behind which resulted in the development of our Ladies Lesson and play program. The adults have seven weeks and fourteen hours of learning which is followed by a summer and fall of play on the course. This female/mother interest has led me to balance my time between the Ladies and the Juniors and has led to a relatively stable number of 80 Juniors and 70 Ladies learning and playing all season long every year.

My advanced Juniors play competitively on the Pepsi Titleist Junior Golf tour with six other Central Ontario Clubs. I know this is an advertisement but I would like to acknowledge the support from Pepsi and Titleist over the years. Their support has helped to develop some fine Junior players from our Tour.

The 24 Advanced Juniors at Shelburne play in as many GAO events as they can. They are reimbursed for at least one GAO entry through our Tex Noble Junior Fund which is supported by our Men's Night 50/50 Draw.

Tex was the CPGA Education Administrator and then general manager during my time on the Board and as President of the CPGA. During his visits to Shelburne in the late 80's he was impressed by the number of Juniors he saw and watched the kids frequently as I taught them. He was so struck with the Shelburne Juniors that when he knew he was dying of cancer he asked his wife Penelope to have his friends donate to the Shelburne Junior Fund, in lieu of flowers, at his funeral. Hence the name Tex Noble Junior Fund which is still going strong some twenty years later thanks to the support of our membership at Shelburne. The cheques I received from educational institutions, government offices and officials and well known citizens was a testament to how well Tex was admired. Tex, the ongoing Junior Fund still bearing his name, is a constant reminder to me of the help he gave me and the CPGA during his term with our Association.

Shelburne is very proud of the fact that students who have been in the program for at least five years have gone on to acquire 11 US scholarships since 2002 and have won five GAO Championships and two Future Links Championships during that time. A number of our Juniors who chose not to pursue US Scholarships received GAO scholarships. Two that come to mind are now in their final years of engineering in Ontario Universities. Thank you GAO for your support of Junior Golfers in Ontario.

A great satisfaction for my wife and me is the fact that all the students that have received scholarships to this point have all attained their degree. At Shelburne everyone knows that education is first, but golf is a close second. And, when my wife isn't around I tell them Golf is number one, school is a close second.

In conclusion, over the years, the greatest satisfaction for both my wife and me has come from watching the young players grow and develop in golf, in school and in life.

Thank you