



Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame

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Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame announces 2017 Class

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Contact Ken MacLeod at 918-280-0787 for more information or to set up interviews with any inductee.

A major champion, two Oklahoma City area club professionals who revolutionized golf course development and two long-time friends who together have competed in 1,433 events on the PGA Tour and PGA Tour Champions comprise the 2017 class of the Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame.

It's a class heavy on Oak Tree National ties, as all five inductees have played crucial roles in the history of one of Oklahoma's iconic clubs.

Bob Tway, winner of the 1986 PGA Championship with one of the most famous shots in golf history, joins fellow long-time Oak Tree members Mark Hayes and Doug Tewell along with Oak Tree founders Joe Walser and Ernie Vossler in the class of 2017.

The induction ceremony will be Oct. 1 at Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club and the Hall of Fame Classic fund-raising golf tournament will be held there Oct. 2. Tickets and sponsorships will go on sale in June with up-to-date information always available at www.oklahomagolfhof.org.

"This is one of the strongest classes imaginable," said Nick Sidorakis, chairman of the Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame board. "You have a major champion. The founders of Landmark Golf, the premier golf development company in the history of the game. Then two extremely talented golfers in Mark and Doug who not only won at the highest levels (a combined seven PGA Tour and eight PGA Tour Champions victories) but were amazingly consistent throughout their long careers.

"This class shows the depth of not just golfing talent that our state has produced but also shows that Oklahomans have been at the forefront of visionary business developments in the game."

Tway, whose greenside bunker shot on the 72nd hole to beat Greg Norman at Inverness in the 1986 PGA Championship is etched in golf lore, also won seven other PGA Tour titles and is still competing on the senior circuit. Along with Tewell and Hayes, he was a mainstay of the famous "Oak Tree Gang," a group of pros proudly displaying the iconic Landmark logo on tour that also included at various times Gil Morgan, Scott Verplank, Willie Wood, David Edwards, Danny Edwards, Gil Morgan, Jim Woodward, Andy Dillard and others.

“It’s very nice of Everett Dobson to start this deal,” Tway said, referring to the Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame founder who also is the current co-owner of Oak Tree National. “There’s some great people in there already. It’s cool. We’ve been pretty fortunate in Oklahoma, haven’t we?”

Hayes, who had a second career in golf as a designer following his playing days, was thrilled to be honored.

“I’m humbled to be included,” Hayes said. “I’ve been lucky to have two careers that I loved (tournament golf and designing golf courses).”

Hayes also credited Vossler and Walser for their visionary work.

“Joe and Ernie started it all for us. Oak Tree is our home, a family to us all.”

Tewell said he was particularly thrilled to be going in with Hayes, a long-time friend and competitor since junior golf.

“From the time I took up the game of golf, it involved Mark Hayes because we lived around the corner from each other (in Stillwater). He really kind of talked me into playing when I was 12,” Tewell said. “He was already a scratch player. I just kind of hung out with him and went to the golf course and that got me playing a lot of golf. My very first tournament was a little 9-hole tournament in Okmulgee when I was 13. I played in an event over there where Ab Justice was head pro. I tied for second (local kid and future OSU player Joe Foster won) and had a playoff against a guy named Mark Hayes. I ended up beating Mark and I guess you could say that sort of started a rivalry. His summer career was 10 times better than mine. He just became such a great player. I chased him and chased him and chased him. It took me a long time to catch up. It was a friendly rivalry because he and I, all through our college career, roomed together and kind of made a pact to stay roommates. While we were on tour, guys used to look at Mark and I and ask, ‘Why do you choose to live in Oklahoma? Why don’t you live down in Florida or somewhere?’ I’d always say, ‘Well, we’ve done all right in Oklahoma.’”

Walser and Vossler, were both successful club pros and former tour players when they co-founded Unique Golf Concepts, which in 1974 became Landmark Land Co. Along with businessman and financier Jerry Barton, they built Oak Tree National in 1976, Oak Tree Country Club in 1980 and went on to transform California’s Coachella Valley with such landmark properties as LaQuinta and PGA West, not to mention Kiawah Island and many others nationally.

“I’m really extremely proud of my dad, and I know he would be deeply honored with this award as well,” said Walser’s son Steve Walser. “It’s a real sign of respect for all the hard work he did over the course of his career in a sport that he loved so much.”

Vossler’s son Andy Vossler, runs Landmark Golf today while his daughter Judy is a senior vice president of the Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau. Andy said the family was very pleased with the recognition.

“Dad was a man who didn’t care much about what had happened but was always looking ahead to the next thing,” Andy Vossler said. “He would be honored that many of his peers would honor him this way.”



BOB TWAY

Bob Tway’s greenside bunker shot on the 72nd hole at the Inverness Club to clinch the 1986 PGA Championship and beat Greg Norman (the world’s No. 1-ranked player at the time) will forever remain one of golf’s most memorable moments.

Incredibly, 11 years earlier at the age of 16, Tway was playing a different sport on grass. He was a 5-foot-6, 135-pound option quarterback in Georgia. A broken arm his sophomore year in high school led to Tway’s early retirement from the sport and golf became his primary focus.

By the time he arrived at Oklahoma State in 1978, Tway was a 6-foot freshman. Four years later as a senior, Tway stood 6-foot-4 and towered over the competition as the 1981 Fred Haskins Award winner for collegiate player of the year. He also was a three-time, first-team All-American, the 1979 Big Eight medalist and helped lead the Cowboys to national championships in 1978 and 1980 with a runner-up finish in 1979.

Though it took four years for Tway to earn playing privileges on the PGA Tour in 1985, he had an immediate impact upon arrival. His second season resulted in four victories, including the aforementioned PGA Championship, 13 Top-10 finishes, placing No. 2 finish on that year's official money list (just \$516 behind season leader Greg Norman) and concluded by being selected as the PGA of the America's Player of the Year.

Alas, it would take the ever-tinkering Tway another 17 seasons to win four more times.

Referring to his pro career as "a roller-coaster ride," Tway is admired for his perseverance that has resulted in eight PGA Tour career victories, 11 runner-up finishes, 10 third-place finishes, 103 Top-10s, 221 Top-25s and nearly \$15.8 million in official earnings. Added to the mix is more than \$2.4 million pocketed so far on the Champions Tour, plus five other professional wins, among them being the 1985 and 1987 Oklahoma Opens.

A 2009 inductee into the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame, perhaps Tway's biggest sin was seeking the perfect swing, something nearly every pro golfer does even when they're successful. "Probably some of it is my fault for tinkering with my golf swing," Tway has said, "but if you're not trying to get better, then what are you trying to do? If I had a crystal ball, maybe I wouldn't have done that stuff, but I was always trying to get better. What can I say?"

Tway's life has gone full-circle. He was born in Oklahoma City, but the Tway family journey began when he was 9, relocating to St. Louis, then Connecticut, then White Plains, N.Y., and eventually landed in Marietta, Ga.

When Stillwater harkened, Tway made the move back to Oklahoma and has resided in the state ever since. He met his future wife, Tammie, during his junior year and they got married after Tway's senior year in 1981. The rest is golf history and what a superb history it has been.

Thirty-one years after stepping out of that bunker victorious at Inverness, Tway now steps into the Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame.



DOUG TEWELL

Doug Tewell started out as a caddy for his father at age 12 in Stillwater. Soon he began playing, excelled quickly and wound up playing for hometown Oklahoma State (1969-71). Tewell then became an assistant golf pro at Kickingbird Golf Course in Edmond, followed with a stint as an assistant pro at Camelback Country Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., and then became head pro at Pinetop (Ariz.) Country Club.

That's when Tewell came to a fork on his career road.

His "Class A" rating with the PGA of America allowed Tewell an opportunity to join the PGA Tour in 1975. He tried to survive Monday qualifiers with other "tour rabbits." Amazingly, Tewell was so proficient on Mondays he never had to endure Qualifying School, nor did he ever lose his PGA Tour playing privileges.

What followed were four PGA Tour victories in seven years, capturing the 1980 Sea Pines Heritage Classic (still his biggest thrill in golf), 1980 IVB-Golf Classic, 1986 Los Angeles Open and 1987 Pensacola Open. Other professional victories came at the 1978 South Central PGA Championship, the 1982 Oklahoma Open and the 1988 Acom Team Championship (with Bob Gilder).

Tewell won more than \$2.7 million and had 60 Top-10 finishes on the PGA Tour and eventually came to another fork in his career path with the 50-and-older Champions Tour.

Granted golf's ultimate mulligan, a rejuvenated Tewell exploded onto the senior scene with eight victories from 2000-04. His first win as a senior was a major, winning the 2000 PGA Seniors' Championship. Tewell won two more times that year and was voted 2000 Rookie of the Year on the Champions Tour, beating out legends Tom Watson and Tom Kite.

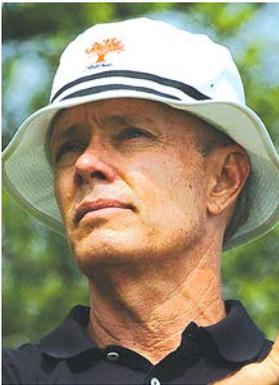
Tewell promptly captured a second career major by winning the 2001 Countrywide Tradition, where his 23-under-par total at The Tradition course was the lowest-scoring total in PGA history for a major championship.

Hampered by a recurring elbow injury, Tewell retired from the tour in February of 2007 after earning more than \$7.7 million in seven full seasons as a senior. Combined with the PGA Tour, Tewell had career earnings of \$10.5 million.

A 2007 inductee into the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame, Tewell consistently was one of the game's straightest hitters off the tee. From 1983-95, he never finished out of the Top 20 in driving accuracy on the PGA Tour. From 1990-95, he never finished out of the Top 5 in that category and led the tour in 1992-93. In his entire Champions Tour career, Tewell never finished out of the top four in driving accuracy and led the tour in 2002-03.

Tewell, who studied speech communications at OSU, also spent time as a golf analyst for the Golf Channel, ESPN and Fox Sports.

Since his 36-year pro career came to a close, retirement has allowed Tewell to devote time to local charity work such as the First Tee of Oklahoma City and to mentoring young golfers. He also has done multiple instructional videos.



MARK HAYES

Mark Hayes has been a prominent golf fixture in Oklahoma for six decades. He excelled at an early age and just kept getting better and better.

A native of Stillwater, Hayes won multiple in-state tournament tournaments while growing up and is considered to be one of the finest junior players Oklahoma has ever produced.

Hayes took up the game at age 6 in College Station, Texas, where his father was the freshman basketball coach at Texas A&M. He idolized Ben Hogan, Arnold Palmer and Gene Littler as a boy and was fortunate to caddie for Littler in a professional event at Quail Creek Golf & Country

Club.

By 1965, Hayes was the Class A state medalist playing at Northeast High School and later teamed with Tewell to win state titles at Stillwater (Donart) High School.

Hayes was Oklahoma's 1967 and 1971 State Amateur champion and in 1972 won both the prestigious Sunnehanna Amateur and the World Cup Amateur, helping the United States capture the Eisenhower Trophy.

Hayes played collegiately at Oklahoma State (1968-71), where he was a two-time, first-team All-American his junior and senior seasons playing for Labron Harris Sr., who was among the 2016 inductees into the Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame. After college, he served two years in the U.S. Army, working on a military course at Fort Jackson, South Carolina along with future PGA Tour competitor and friend Joe Inman. He competed for the army, winning the U.S. Military Inter-Service Golf Championship, and saved his off days for competing in amateur events, winning the Sunnehanna Amateur, finishing second in the U.S. Amateur and playing for the victorious U.S. side in the World Cup.

Known for wearing his signature bucket cap, Hayes turned professional in 1973, won three times on PGA Tour in the 1970s

and also finished runner-up six times. He placed no worse than 68th on the money list for eight straight seasons (1974-81).

Hayes' premier tour victory came at the 1977 Tournament Players Championship. He picked up his fourth and final PGA Tour victory at the 1986 Tallahassee Open.

Hayes played on the victorious Ryder Cup team in 1979 and was teammates with Oak Tree neighbor Gil Morgan. Hayes, who won his Sunday singles match against Antonio Garrido, actually was first alternate for the team and ended up replacing leading money winner Tom Watson, who withdrew to be with his wife, Linda, for the birth of their first child.

From 1976-82, Hayes had Top-15 finishes in all four majors. His best finish was a tie for sixth at the 1980 U.S. Open at Baltusrol, where he began the final round just two strokes behind eventual winner Jack Nicklaus. Hayes shot a 63 in the second round of the Open Championship at Turnberry in 1977, tying the record for lowest round in any major championship.

A long-time resident at Oak Tree, Hayes was a three-time Oklahoma Open champion (1976, 1988, 1993) in the days when the field was its most competitive and culminated with a victory at age 44 across the street at Oak Tree Country Club.

All told, Hayes won more than \$2.1 million in official prize money with 57 Top-10 finishes and 150 Top-25 finishes in 604 career starts on the PGA Tour.

In the late 1980s, Hayes began his own golf course design company and completed multiple projects throughout Oklahoma and neighboring states.

Some of his work included a renovation of the East Course at Oak Tree Country Club, new design of Eagle Crest Golf Course in Alma, Ark. and renovations of The Cascades in Tyler, Texas, Stillwater Country Club, Oak Tree National and many more.



ERNIE VOSSLER (1928-2013)

Ernie Orville Vossler was widely known as one of golf's premier developers, but he also could swing a club.

Vossler's early victories came on the Pascal High School golf team in Fort Worth, Texas, where he began a friendship with teammate Dan Jenkins, who became one of the most revered golf writers in history. After Vossler had made a name for himself as a local amateur, fellow Texans Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson wrote letters on his behalf for his admittance to the PGA Tour.

Vossler had three PGA Tour wins over a three-year span – 1958 Kansas City Open; 1959 Tijuana Open Invitational; 1960 Carling Open Invitational -- and also won the 1960 Panama Open. He tied for fifth in the 1959 U.S. Open and also competed at the 1956 Masters and 1961 PGA Championship.

To provide stability for his family, Vossler cut back on his full-time tour schedule and became head golf professional at Quail Creek Golf and Country Club while the golf course and residential community were still in design. He remained at Quail Creek for more than a decade and established relationships the PGA of America and PGA Tour by hosting the annual Oklahoma City Open from 1962-67. He pioneered the use of a logo to enhance sales while at Quail Creek, something that paid huge dividends later with the famous Oak Tree logo at Landmark.

Vossler transformed his far-reaching skills toward teaching and being a golf club operator. In 1967, he was named PGA Professional of the Year and many of his students enjoyed success on the PGA, Champions and LPGA tours.

In 1971, Vossler and fellow 2017 Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame inductee Joe Walser Jr. began their historic trek as golf pioneers in land development. They co-founded Unique Golf Concepts, Inc., which in 1974 became Landmark Land

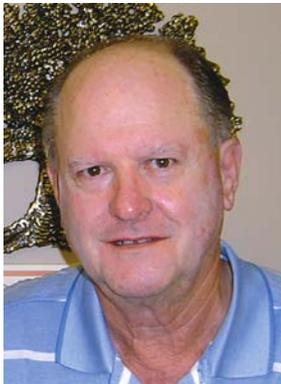
Company, Inc., and quickly enjoyed monstrous growth both nationally and internationally.

One of their earliest gems was Oak Tree Golf Club (now Oak Tree National) in Edmond, which opened in 1976. Five years later came the adjacent 36-hole Oak Tree Country Club across Kelly Avenue. Oak Tree National hosted four major events in the 1984 U.S. Amateur, 1988 PGA Championship, 2006 Senior PGA Championship and the 2014 U.S. Senior Open, while Oak Tree Country Club became home for the Oklahoma Open and several prestigious amateur events, including the 1989 NCAA Championships, won by the Oklahoma Sooners.

Using Vossler's close ties with the PGA of America and the PGA Tour, the Landmark team was on the cutting edge of golf club marketing concepts such as "bundled charges" with fellow Landmark properties.

Vossler has been recognized with multiple honors, which included being presented the President's Award for the Southern California Section of the PGA of America.

Vossler, who passed away Feb. 16, 2013 in La Quinta, Calif., at age 84, was no stranger to Halls of Fame, being inducted in 2005 as a member of the PGA of America Golf Professional Hall of Fame for his "dedication to and passion for the game of golf ... along with his service and accomplishments." Vossler was married to a Hall of Fame wife in Marlene Hagge, a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame. In 1950, at age 16, Hagge was the youngest of 13 founders of the LPGA Tour and remains the youngest-ever tour member in LPGA history. She won the 1956 LPGA Championship and 26 LPGA Tour events in her career.



JOE WALSER (1932-2012)

Known as a friendly, trustworthy and insightful visionary, Joe Walser Jr. steadily built a stellar career as a player, PGA professional and golf developer.

Born and raised in Oklahoma City, Walser was a member of state championship teams at Capitol Hill High School and received a full scholarship from Labron Harris Sr. to play at Oklahoma A&M, which later became Oklahoma State and was where his son, Jeff, would play 25 years later.

After earning his bachelor's degree in education, Joe Walser served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army at Fort Benning, Ga., and Fort Riley, Kan. Walser began his golf career at age 14 while caddying for his father and turned pro in 1954, the same day his first son, Steve, was born. Walser would win 25 amateur/professional tournaments, including the Oklahoma State Amateur and the Oklahoma Open.

Walser left the tour and worked as a club pro at Yukon Country Club, Lake Hefner Golf Course and Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club. Two of his closest friends and golf partners were Ab Justice, a longtime golf contributor and OSU's first All-American, and Alsie Hyden, a 2008 inductee into the Oklahoma Women's Golf Hall of Fame as a lifelong proponent for women playing the game.

Hyden, who has been director of golf at Lake Hefner Golf Course for nearly a half-century, became close friends with Walser since their freshman year at OSU. Hyden came to Lake Hefner when Walser moved to Oklahoma Golf & CC in 1968. "He dreamed big and what he got accomplished was big," Hyden said of Walser.

In 1970, Walser was presented the PGA of America Horton Smith Award, which recognized his contributions to the education of fellow golf professionals.

In 1971, Walser formed Unique Golf Concepts with fellow 2017 Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame inductee Ernie Vossler and with three-time Ryder Cup member Johnny Pott alongside later founded Landmark Land Company, Inc., which in 1992 became Landmark Golf LP.

Walser served as vice president in charge of golf operations, golf course design and construction. Jerry Barton joined as the development expert and Walser worked closely with Pete Dye on the construction of both Oak Tree Golf Club (opened in 1976) and later Oak Tree Country Club (opened in 1981).

Oak Tree National carried the nation's highest course rating ever when it opened, which deemed it the hardest golf course in America. The Walser-Vossler-Dye trio would later would an even harder track with the Stadium Course at PGA West in Palm Springs, Calif. Other Dye-designed classics that quickly sprang from Oak Tree included PGA West, La Quinta Resort and Mission Hills, plus the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island, S.C.

Walser saw the value of having 2016 Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame inductee Gil Morgan, 2017 inductees Bob Tway, Doug Tewell and Mark Hayes, plus future inductees Scott Verplank, Willie Wood, David and Danny Edwards and other touring pros wear the Oak Tree logo, which quickly became one of the most recognizable symbols in golf.

A 2005 inductee into the Southern California Section of the PGA of America Hall of Fame, Walser met his future wife Patricia Irene "Pat" Eubanks in high school. They were married in Oklahoma City in 1953 and remained together until her death in 2009.

Walser died on May 10, 2012, in Dallas, Texas, with his family by his side, after a valiant fight against Alzheimer's Disease.