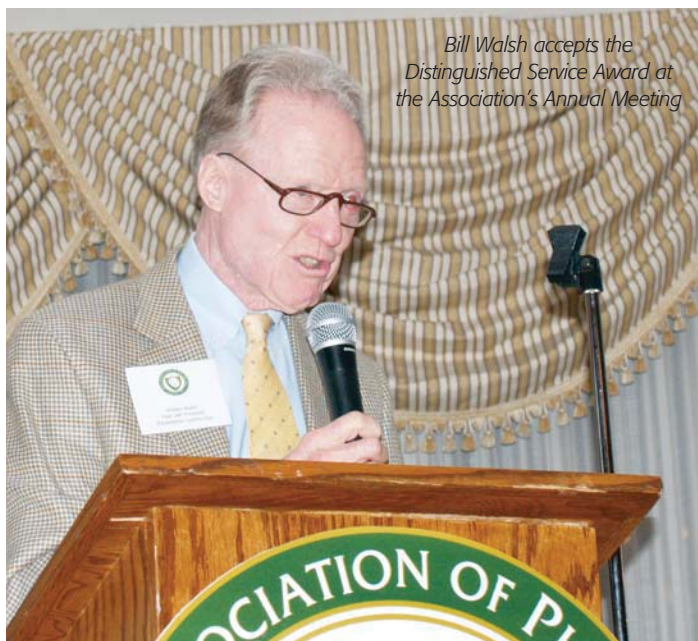


Bill Walsh, former President, longtime Platt Supporter, honored with Distinguished Service Award

By Fred Behringer

William T. Walsh is the recipient of the Golf Association of Philadelphia Distinguished Service Award for 2008 in recognition of his exhaustive list of contributions to the betterment of GAP and to the game of golf.

Since his arrival in the Philadelphia area in 1955, Bill Walsh has demonstrated excellence and thankless service as an outstanding competitor, a leader of many facets of GAP operations and an inspirational promoter of the J. Wood Platt Caddie Scholarship Trust. He also is credited with the persuasiveness that led GAP to accept non-private clubs into membership in the 1990s.



Bill Walsh accepts the Distinguished Service Award at the Association's Annual Meeting

His efforts epitomize the criteria for recipients of the award: "Individuals from any golf-related disciplines who have exemplified the spirit of the game at its highest level and who have made a substantial contribution to the game at the Philadelphia, national or international level."

And Walsh, 86, continues to serve the game in important ways after more than a half century of helping others.

Paul "Chet" Walsh, one of 15 children raised by Bill and his wife of 60 years, Barbara, points out that his father has led Philadelphia Country Club's Platt Trust fundraising to a total of \$850,000 in eight years. Philadelphia Country collected the highest total among GAP clubs in five of the last six years and has produced the most lifetime members of the Trust. "None of this would have happened," said Chet, "without the hard work of Bill Walsh."

For many years, he sent hand-written notes of solicitation and appreciation on behalf of the Trust.

"I probably spend more time on the Platt Trust than I do working,"

acknowledges Walsh, who is in the office nearly every day at the Walsh Associates insurance business he operates with three of his children. "I enjoy doing it. I feel for those kids to some degree because I was a caddie myself. When the caddies thank me for what we have done for them at Philadelphia Country Club, that makes you feel good."

Villanova University, the Ardmore Rotary Club and the Retired Senior Volunteer Personnel of Montgomery County are among other organizations who have benefited significantly from Walsh's participation and fundraising.

Walsh began playing golf at age 10 in New Jersey, caddied at Metuchen Golf & Country Club and won two championships there and one at Plainfield Country Club before moving to the Philadelphia area. He later added two club championships at Skytop Golf Course and seven at Philadelphia Country Club.

Walsh continues to serve the game in important ways after more than a half century of helping others.

He was about to play his 600th different golf course as the deadline for this article approached, and he was looking to score his age or better for the 200th time.

When Chet Walsh won his sixth championship at Philadelphia Country Club, he decided to stop competing for the title so he would not tie or pass his father. "I heard about it," Bill recalled, "and I said to him, 'Chet, a father always gets a lot more pleasure out of what his children accomplish than what he accomplishes himself. I'd love to have you go on and win it five more times if you could.'" Chet now holds nine championships.

Walsh considers his GAP Senior Amateur Championship in 1991 his most significant golfing achievement. At age 69, he became the oldest competitor to claim the title. He also holds 10 Father-Son titles with four different sons over the last five decades.

He served on the GAP Executive Committee from 1982 to 1995 and as GAP president from 1991 to 1994.

Craig Ammerman, himself a past GAP President, feels Walsh's most important contribution to the Association may have come after he served as President "when he shepherded through a bylaw change that for the first time opened the membership in the Golf Association to golf facilities other than private ones."

GAP presidents typically serve a year on the Executive Committee when they leave office, and in 1995 Walsh was in that position when, Ammerman said, "it became apparent that a majority of the Executive





Walsh family members attended the Annual Meeting in which Bill Walsh was recognized with the DSA.

Committee wanted to change that bylaw. It was an issue that was moderately contentious on occasion, and it might not have gotten through the Committee but for Bill's support.

"The vote wasn't that close, but given the respect in which Bill was held, his support for the change probably carried some votes with it. Then it became clear that it could be an uphill battle to get it approved [by the GAP member clubs]. Some of the clubs that are better known, ones like Merion [Golf Club] and Pine Valley [Golf Club] and Philadelphia Country Club and Aronimink [Golf Club] and others like that, were very supportive, but there was a group that wasn't and



Bill Walsh (right) and son P. Chet

didn't want to do it. And so Bill just became a quiet diplomat and talked one-on-one with these clubs." The bylaw change won approval by about 85 percent.

"I'll be forever grateful to Bill for being willing to take the time to stick around and make sure we got that done," said Ammerman. "It truly would have plagued the Golf Association if it hadn't passed –

and should have plagued the Golf Association. And unless you were on the inside, you wouldn't have known that Bill had anything to do with it.

"His contributions to golf just seem to get better and better. His work supporting the Platt Trust is amazing. He's always willing to help if somebody asks him to. If there's anybody who deserves whatever people give him, it's Bill Walsh."

Walsh said he was "very honored" to learn of the Distinguished Service Award. "Any success I've had in life," he emphasized, "is largely due to the wonderful wife that I was fortunate enough to marry. We're very lucky. I thank God every day for having given me such a good wife and so many healthy, wonderful children. We've been very blessed."

News of the award pleased the Walsh children. "We are very excited that Dad has received the GAP Distinguished Service Award," said Brendan Walsh, the head golf professional at The Country Club in Brookline, Mass. "He has always taught us to give back in those areas in your life that you have received so much. He has the utmost respect for the game of golf and the GAP."

Daughter Tez Seiberlich added, "My Dad has always been committed to the organizations he feels are most tied to his passions. The Golf Association of Philadelphia is certainly at the top of the list. This unselfish commitment has provided a strong example for his children. It's hard to find a Walsh son or daughter who isn't dedicating some of their time in service to a non-profit organization.

"Golf has provided much for my Dad – friends, challenges, time to spend with his children. He gets the greatest joy from this game. It is wonderful for him to be honored with this award. As Dad's time becomes more his own, I'm sure he will sit back and really appreciate this award, which represents all that he has given to golf in Philadelphia."

Fred Behringer is a golf magazine editor, public relations consultant and member of the GAP Communications Committee. He is the former editor of Philadelphia Golf Magazine and Philadelphia Golfer and has covered golf in the Philadelphia area for more than 40 years.



Wife of 60 years, Barbara Walsh



JUNIOR INTER-CLUB CHAMPIONS. Yardley Country Club, under the direction of head professional Matt Esposito, earned its first Big Five Junior Inter-Club Championship recently. The first-time Inter-Club participant defeated teams from Lu Lu Country Club, North Hills Country Club, Old York Road Country Club, Spring Mill Country Club, Talamore Country Club and Torresdale-Frankford Country Club in the seven-week competition. Pictured are team members (back row, from left) Denis Dotson, Drew Keeling, Max Matijek, Ryan King, Jon VanderMerkt, Dylan Amin, Jaclyn Rogowicz and Matt Esposito; (front row) Dan Dansbury, Kyle Sterbinsky, Dan Hayes and Ryan Conner. Team members not pictured are: Joe Duvall, Ryan Garrigan, Joe Gunerman, Anja Kinaszczuk, Sarah Kokotajlo, Colby Lederer and Noah Prickett.