
100 YEARS OF THE CPGA



*Peggy & Warren Bell at Pine Needles
Lodge & Country Club*

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Trailblazers of the Sixties

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The decade of the Sixties marked one of the most tumultuous and divisive decades in world history, the era marked by the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War and antiwar protests, countercultural movements and political assassinations. Man first walked on the moon and thousands partied at Woodstock.

On the golf course, “The Big Three” triumvirate of Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player took the pro tour by storm. MacGregor and Wilson Staff were two of the biggest names in golf equipment, and Karsten Solheim designed the PING Anser putter. And golfers for the first time wore an innovation known as “stretch fabric” (a.k.a. polyester) that had an ability to return to its original shape after being extended.

In the Carolinas, two golf pros named Peggy Kirk Bell and Charles Sifford played significant roles in helping golf evolve past its male caucasian roots.

Peggy and Warren Bell in 1953 began running and later owned Pine Needles Lodge & Golf Club in Southern Pines, with Peggy playing

the LPGA Tour while Warren managed the golf operation on a day-to-day basis. One day in the mid-1950s, a woman asked for a golf lesson.

“I told her everything I knew,” Peggy said. “I said, ‘Try this.’ I said, ‘Try that.’ Nothing worked. I know that woman quit golf then and there.”

That experience fueled Peggy to learn how to teach the game and especially how to teach women to play. Soon after, the Pine Needles staff sent flyers to every club in the Carolinas and Virginia promoting a new concept – a weekend golf camp for ladies they called a “Golfari,” a take-off on the word “safari.”

Though Peggy died at the age of 95 in 2016, her “Golfari” tradition remains strong at Pine Needles, which is still owned by her family and has been the venue for four U.S. Women’s Open championships. Her inroads in teaching led her to being named 1961 LPGA Teacher of the Year as well as collecting multiple honors including Golf Digest’s “One of the Six Best Women Teachers in the World;” the 1990 LPGA’s Ellen Griffin Rolex Award; and a 2013 induction into the Carolinas PGA Hall of Fame.

“There is not one week that goes by that I don’t get a letter or phone call from someone who’s been in a Golfari and has a success story,” Peggy said years later. “They’ve broken a hundred. They’ve broken ninety. They’ve won the club championship.

“Sometimes you can be struggling, struggling, struggling with a student, and then all of a sudden the light comes on and they get it. Watching them hit the ball flush and seeing the smile on their face makes it all worthwhile.”

Sifford was born in Charlotte in 1922 and learned at the age of 10 he could make more money as a caddie at Carolina Country Club than the two dollars a week his father earned as a laborer. He earned 60 cents a day and gave his mother 50 cents, keeping a dime to buy the cigars that would become his trademark on the golf course. The club was closed on Mondays and the caddies were allowed to play, and Sifford fell in love with the game. With informal lessons from Sutton

Alexander, the club owner, and Clayton Heafner, the head professional, Sifford could shoot par by the age of 13.

In 1939, he moved to Philadelphia, where there was more opportunity for a young African-American male on the golf course, and later won five straight National Negro Open championships from 1952-1956.

Sifford challenged the PGA Tour's "Caucasian-only clause" and became a full-time member of the tour in 1960. The next year, members of the Greensboro Jaycees decided to invite Sifford to the 1961 Greater Greensboro Open, and host club Sedgefield Country Club passed a resolution saying that "neither

creed, color nor race" would be the basis for rejecting an applicant to play in the tournament. The Jaycees asked long-time Lexington Country Club professional and Carolinas PGA President Dugan Aycock, whom Sifford had caddied for years earlier at Carolina Country Club, to call Sifford and extend the invitation.

"When Dugan called, I asked my wife if I should go, and she said, 'Yeah, go ahead, they aren't going to do anything to you down there,' and they didn't," Sifford said. "Those people, they treated me nice. That pro there [the late Tom Case], he took care of me."

Sifford led the first round with a 68 and finished fourth behind winner Mike Souchak, Sam Snead and Billy Maxwell. But he won a lot more.

"I had come through my first Southern tournament with the worst kind of social pressure and discrimination around me, and I hadn't cracked. I hadn't quit," Sifford said.

Sifford won twice on the PGA Tour — the 1967 Greater Hartford



Charles Sifford

Open and 1969 Los Angeles Open—and maintained his tour exempt status as one of the top 60 money winners for a decade through 1969. When the Senior Tour evolved in the 1980s, Sifford won nearly \$1 million in prize money and one tournament. He was named to the Carolinas Hall of Fame in 1985 and the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2004.

“You’re going to have to forgive me, because this is touching,” Sifford said at the WGOF induction. “A little ole caddie boy from Charlotte, North Carolina ... getting inducted into this great hall. How about it?”

The 1960s also included the presence of noted club pros and instructors like Davis Love Jr., L.B. Floyd and Jimmy D’Angelo.

Love was born and raised in Arkansas and played collegiate golf at the University of Texas for the noted teacher and professional Harvey Penick. His first job as a club pro was at Charlotte Country Club, where he served from 1962-64. His bride Penta was pregnant with their first child when Davis was invited to the 1964 Masters Tournament. He shot a first-round 69 to share the lead with eventual champion Arnold Palmer, Gary Player, Kel Nagel and Bob Goalby, but faded with rounds of 75-74-76. The Monday following the tournament, Davis III was born.

Love left for Atlanta Country Club later that year and then moved to Sea Island Club at St. Simon’s Island, Ga., but Davis III found his way back to the Carolinas when he matriculated at the University of North Carolina from 1982-85 and then went on to a PGA Tour career that included one PGA Championship, two-time captaincy of the Ryder Cup and 37 career wins.

L.B. Floyd was an Army master sergeant stationed at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville in 1941 when some buddies cajoled him into joining them for a round of golf. Floyd was skeptical, calling the game “cow-pasture pool,” but he quickly came under the game’s spell and taught himself to play. In less than six months, he was giving lessons to others and was off on a brand new career in the golf business, one that would see him provide lessons, mentorship and places to play for Cumberland County

golfers for six decades. Floyd was named head professional at Fort Bragg's Stryker Golf Course in the early 1950s, and he later operated and was part-owner of Green Valley Golf and Country Club in Fayetteville and in 1968 went into business with Al Prewitt to develop and build Cypress Lakes Golf Club in Hope Mills.

Son Raymond was born in 1942 and daughter Marlene followed in 1948, and both youngsters developed outstanding golf games under the tutelage of their father.

Ray Floyd joined the pro golf tour in 1963 and collected 22 wins on the PGA Tour and four major championships, including an eight-shot cruise in the 1976 Masters and a triumph in the 1986 U.S. Open at the age of 43. Floyd was appointed to eight Ryder Cup teams and is a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame.

The Dunes Club opened in 1947 as Myrtle Beach's second course, following Pine Lakes International, and club founder Buster Bryan remembered a bright young pro from Philadelphia have worked in the late 1930s teaching golf for Robert White, the first president of the PGA, at Myrtle Beach's lone golf course, Ocean Forest Golf Club (later to become Pine Lakes International).

Bryan called D'Angelo and asked him to visit Myrtle Beach and take a close look at the club's plans and vision. D'Angelo was sold on the idea and soon became the club's head pro and membership salesman, traveling the Carolinas and Mid-Atlantic in a Plymouth automobile and then a DeSoto. He would work at The Dunes Club his entire career.

"When I came down here, everybody thought I was out of my mind," D'Angelo said years later. "Most people wouldn't be crazy enough to do what I did. There were no guarantees at all. Nobody had ever heard of Myrtle Beach."

Myrtle Beach had three golf courses in 1960 — Pine Lakes, the Dunes Club and the Surf Club. The Myrtle Beach golf explosion began in the late 1960s with the opening of Myrtlewood, Litchfield Country Club,

Brierwood, Sea Gull, Possum Trot, Beachwood, Quail Creek and Robbers Roost. The “Grand Strand” would number more than 100 courses at its peak in the early 2000s.

“When we built the Surf Club in 1960, everyone said we’d built one golf course too many,” D’Angelo said. How wrong that turned out to be as Myrtle Beach evolved into a key component of the Carolinas PGA story.



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