



## **PGA of America REACH Foundation Awards \$250,000 Places to Play Grant to Gillespie Golf Course Re-Imagination Project**

### ***Editors:***

*For photos of the “Greensboro Six” plaques at Gillespie Golf Course, [click here](#)*

**GREENSBORO, North Carolina and FRISCO, Texas (February 19, 2024)** - The PGA of America REACH Foundation has awarded the 2025 Places to Play Spectator Championship Legacy Grant to Gillespie Golf Course in its effort to revitalize Greensboro’s oldest municipal golf course with a prominent history during the civil rights movement. The \$250,000 Legacy Grant is awarded by the PGA of America in conjunction with the 2025 PGA Championship, to be played at Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte in May 2025, and offers a lasting community impact to promote playing opportunities for all.

In response to the grant award, Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan said, “The City of Greensboro is honored to receive the PGA of America REACH Foundation Places to Play Grant. Gillespie Golf Course’s significance goes far beyond golf and includes impact on the Civil Rights Movement, ongoing local community engagement and opportunities for life skills development for those of all backgrounds and abilities. We are committed to this special facility and grateful for the PGA of America’s generous support.”

Located approximately 90 miles from Quail Hollow Club, and near the PGA of America’s Carolinas Section headquarters at Bryan Park in Greensboro, Gillespie Golf Course opened in 1941 with a beautiful 18-hole layout designed by famed golf architect Perry Maxwell. Maxwell is one of the most acclaimed golf architects of the 20th century whose work includes Southern Hills in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Old Town Club in Winston-Salem and a major renovation of Augusta National in 1937, home of the Masters Tournament.

“It’s a true honor to work alongside the City of Greensboro and the Carolinas PGA

Section to elevate the historic Gillespie Golf Course through our Places to Play Program,” said PGA of America CEO Seth Waugh. “Gillespie Golf Course is rich with history, by revitalizing key areas of the facility we will ensure that all members of the community can enjoy this game we love for generations to come. This will not only enable golf to be learned and enjoyed, but also help to show the importance and impact of breaking barriers to accessibility.”

The Gillespie Golf Course has an incredible history during the racial strife of the 1950s. On December 7th, 1955, one week after Rosa Parks refused to give her bus seat to a white man, the “Greensboro Six,” a group of heroic Black men, were arrested for daring to play the white-only golf course. The gentlemen, remembered on a historic marker near the clubhouse, were tired of the shaggy conditioning and putrid smell from a sewage plant near Nocho Park, the nearby Blacks-only course. Dr. George Simkins Jr., a prominent second-generation dentist, champion tennis player and golfer, led the charge to tee it up at Gillespie. After their arrest, the case moved through the courts and was argued before the United States Supreme Court. The court ruled 5-4 against the Greensboro Six. Due to a related case, Gillespie was to be integrated, but before that happened the clubhouse was set on fire. The City decided to abandon its involvement and sold the property where nine of the 18 holes were, resulting in the back nine being bulldozed to create a parking lot for City vehicles and equipment. In 1962, the City voted to reopen the nine remaining holes of Gillespie Golf Course to all Greensboro residents.

The City of Greensboro is now investing \$2 million in the Gillespie Golf Course renovation project and is working closely with the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation to secure additional funding to bring the course back to Perry Maxwell’s vision by completing a master plan and engaging with one of the most decorated modern-day architects, Rees Jones. Jones has designed or renovated more than 260 golf courses, including Bryan Park’s Champions Course, and earned the moniker “The Open Doctor” for his work in preparation for seven U.S. Open venues, nine PGA Championship courses and six Ryder Cups.

“Having grown up across the street as a young boy and watching Perry Maxwell build the original Gillespie Golf Course, I am honored to see my good friend Rees Jones bring Gillespie back to a place of prominence for all of our residents to enjoy,” said Jim Melvin, former Mayor of Greensboro and President & CEO of the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation.

In addition to the Bryan Foundation and the Carolinas Section of the PGA of America, the City is joining forces with the First Tee - Central Carolina (based at Gillespie Golf Course), the Wyndham Championship and North Carolina A&T to enhance the renovation project with aspirations of revitalized practice areas, a short game course, a mural of the Greensboro Six and clubhouse renovations. The City is also pursuing additional funding through state and federal grants and local corporate

support.

“We are delighted to support the ongoing efforts to bring Gillespie Golf Course back to its prominence and provide a community gathering spot for people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy this great game of golf,” said Carolinas PGA Section President Chris Byrd. “We are proud of Gillespie Golf Course Head PGA of America Golf Professional Bob Brooks who supports our PGA REACH pillars of youth player development, military and veteran outreach through PGA HOPE and our diversity and inclusion efforts to do good through golf.”

### **About PGA REACH Carolinas**

The PGA REACH Carolinas Foundation is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization and philanthropic arm of the Carolinas PGA Section, the largest of the 41 sections in the United States. Our 2,300 PGA Professionals across North and South Carolina are committed to serving our communities and growing the game of golf through our three pillars: Youth, Military, and Diversity & Inclusion. Signature programs include PGA HOPE, PGA Junior League, Drive, Chip & Putt, Harvick4HighSchoolGolf, the Prokope Academy and the PGA WORKS Fellowship. For more information, please visit [carolinas.pga.com/foundation/](https://carolinas.pga.com/foundation/). You can also find PGA REACH Carolinas on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) @REACHCarolinas.

### **About PGA of America REACH Foundation**

The PGA of America REACH Foundation is the 501(c)(3) charitable foundation of the PGA of America. The mission of the Foundation is to positively impact the lives of youth, military and diverse populations by enabling access to PGA of America Golf Professionals, PGA Sections and the game of golf. For more information on the PGA of America REACH Foundation, visit [PGAREACH.org](https://PGAREACH.org), follow @PGAREACH on [Instagram](#), [X](#), [formerly known as Twitter](#) and find us on [Facebook](#).

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