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ILLINOIS PGA NEWS

SIX ENTER THE ILLINOIS GOLF HALL OF FAME

The 2019 Illinois Golf Hall of Fame Class Honored at Induction Ceremony

GLENVIEW, Ill. – October 22, 2019 – The night belonged to a group of six individuals who represent all aspects of golf. Emil Esposito, William Langford, Carol Mann, Francis Peabody, Harry Radix and Len Ziehm were all inducted into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame at The Glen Club on Friday, October 18, as the largest class since 1997.

For the past three decades, the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame has preserved the sport's history and excellence within all aspects of the game and has connected generations of golf fans with the rich tradition and history of golf throughout the state.

That tradition continued Friday, as the golf community inducted six of its leaders into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame. The night was highly focused on Esposito, a PGA Professional at The Glen Club and Ziehm, who were the only two living inductees in the class. But nonetheless, all six of these leaders were recognized and honored for their outstanding careers and achievements in the game of golf.

"For the past 53 years, golf has been my passion," said Esposito. "It's enabled me to play the game, teach the game and grow the game. I love promoting the game of golf and it's a dream come true to be inducted into the Hall of Fame."

Esposito has been a PGA Professional for over 50 years. He always had a passion for teaching and promoting the game, but also had a great playing career. His amateur highlights include titles in the 1957 IHSA Championship and 1960 Midwest Amateur. Esposito was the winner of the 1966 and 1974 Illinois Open and he also won the 1979 Illinois PGA Professional Championship. He held positions at Brookwood and Mount Prospect, before a long run at Kemper Lakes, and eventually The Glen Club, where he still teaches today.

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“I’m very grateful that, at 82 years old, I am still teaching,” said Esposito. “I love what I do and there is nothing I enjoy more than when my students tell me that they’ve never hit the ball this well before or that they shot their lowest score.”

Ziehm joined a short list of golf media personnel to be inducted into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame on Friday. Starting out at the Hammond Times and then moving to the Chicago Sun-Times, where he forged a 41-year career, Ziehm was a pioneer in covering national and local golf in the Chicagoland area.

“I’m really honored to be inducted into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame, but even more so, to be a part of a class that represents the different aspects of golf as much as this class does,” said Ziehm.

Ziehm has covered local and national golf for over half a century. He has always been a fixture at local tournaments, covering more than 50 majors in his lifetime and providing countless reports that captured key moments, such as Johnny Miller’s final round 63 at the 1973 U.S. Open at Oakmont Country Club.

“I never wanted to do anything else workwise other than what I did, said Ziehm. “Dating back to junior high, I wanted to write for a newspaper or maybe do some magazine work, and that’s all I’ve done for my entire career. I’ve been very lucky and I’ve had a lot of fun. I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

Although no longer with us, Langford, Mann, Peabody and Radix all had a great impact on golf both at a national level and at the local level.

Langford is best known for his impeccable golf courses. His designs can be seen throughout the country at the likes of Lawsonia Links in Wisconsin, Wakonda Golf Club in Iowa and at Bryn Mawr Country Club, Butterfield Country Club, Ruth Lake Country and Skokie Country Club in Illinois.

Mann was an extraordinary golfer in the 1960s and 1970s, winning 38 LPGA tournaments. A true activist for women and golf, Mann was the President of the LPGA and was the first woman to regularly appear on men’s and women’s broadcast. She grew up and learned the game at Olympia Fields Country Club.

Peabody’s passion for the game and caddies led to the development of the Chicago District Golf Association (CDGA) in 1914. Peabody served as the CDGA’s first president and his vision created the foundation of the CDGA we know today.

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Radix was a behind-the-scenes leader who was a fixture on the local and national golf scene. He will forever be remembered for befriending countless players and attending every Major tournament he possibly could. The Radix Cup Matches were started in 1962 in his honor.

About the Illinois PGA/Illinois PGA Foundation

The Illinois Section of the PGA of America is a professional organization serving the men and women golf professionals in northern and central Illinois who are the recognized experts in growing, teaching and managing the game of golf. The Illinois PGA is responsible for the administration of competitive golf tournaments, educational opportunities, support programs and growth of the game initiatives. With over 840 members and apprentices, the Illinois PGA is one of the 41 regional Sections that comprise the PGA of America. The Illinois PGA Foundation focuses its community efforts on promoting the goodwill and growth of the game with an emphasis on activities that benefit youth. Foundation initiatives include: GolfWorks Illinois, Youth-based Scholarship Funds and the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame. For more information about the Illinois PGA and the Illinois PGA Foundation, please visit www.ipga.com and join us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

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