Janet Beardsley Junior Girls Golf Event

Friday, July 13, 2007

Janet Shock Beardsley was born into golf on August 12, 1918. Growing up, she and her brother Don played Community Golf Course where their father was the course manager. A rare talent, Janet’s natural ability on the course caught the eye of Moraine Country Club professional, Alex Campbell, who took Janet under his wing and taught her to play, giving her the gift of golf – one that would last her a lifetime. With the permission of Mr. Kettering, the two would practice for hours on the property adjacent to what is now Kettering Memorial Hospital.

In 1933, business teacher Dick Sommers asked Janet, then a freshman, to join the first golf team at Kettering Fairmont High School, where she went on to play all four years as the only girl on the all-male golf team. During summer vacations, Janet’s brother, Don, competed in junior tournaments while she dominated the Dayton City Amateur Championship winning the 1935-1937 and 1953-1954 tournaments, and the Dayton District Golf Championship, winning from 1935-1939. Janet’s winning streak was only stoppable by the discontinuation of the DDGC tournament in 1940.

After high school, Janet Shock headed off to Denison University, where she was asked to play on the men’s golf team. While her female physical education teacher was against her participation, the president of the university said that if Janet could qualify for the team, she could play. She qualified, was accepted by her male teammates, and promptly dropped the physical education class. Her first year on the team, Denison captured the 1938 Ohio Conference Championship. Janet’s legacy lives on at the university; she was inducted into Denison’s Athletic Hall of Fame in 1980.

During her junior year at Denison, Janet met Charles “Chuck” Beardsley. A basketball star and president of the junior class at Denison, Chuck is also a member of the school’s lettermen association. Janet fondly remembers him as a “big man on campus.” They were married in 1943 while he was in the service, stationed in Missouri. The Beardsleys are a family of great golfers. Chuck, a 10 handicap, enjoyed the game until his death in 1992. Their son, Craig, is a corporate pilot living in Dayton and enjoys playing golf with his friends and family. Their daughter, Phyllis Beardsley Kwedar, now lives in Texas and has played competitive golf in the Dayton area and Texas throughout her life. Phyllis’ two children follow in the family’s athletic tradition; Janet’s granddaughter Lauren completed her collegiate golf career at Rhodes College in 2003. Her grandson, Greg, excels at rugby, but is a natural golfer as well. As you can see, Janet’s passion for the game has reached those she loves the most.

A humble golfer, Janet’s favorite golf memories include exhibition matches with Patty Berg and having the opportunity to play “without making waves.” She was on hand to see Annika Sorenstam play at the men’s Colonial golf tournament in Fort Worth, Texas. Says Janet of Annika’s effort, “I think she’s smart. She proved her point and now she’s moving on” spoken with the mindset of a woman who carried herself professionally in an amateur era.

Mrs. Beardsley’s brother, Don Shock, professional emeritus at Columbus Country Club, remains an influence on her game. “He still helps me quite a bit,” she says. Janet, Craig, Phyllis, Lauren and Greg have all spent many happy hours on the CCC driving range under Don’s tutelage, laughing, learning, and enjoying each other’s company.

Janet Beardsley’s advice to the young players is what she has followed during her own golf career: “Play the golf course, not the other person.”

Sadly, only two months after attending the 2007 junior tournament at Community Golf Course, Janet Beardsley passed away. She leaves a legacy to female golfers everywhere as a gentle soul and tenacious competitor. She will always be the First Lady of Dayton golf. It is fitting that this tournament be named in her honor.