

# The Illinois Golf Hall of Fame

*Recognizing our state's pioneers, patrons and proponents of the game, past and present*

*What do industry icons Robert Williams, Ray Gerber and Oscar Miles have in common? In our MAGCS circle, we know them as past winners of the prestigious Charles Bartlett Award. Named after the famed Chicago Tribune sportswriter, this award—chosen by past winners and given on an as-merited basis—honors members who have positively promoted our profession, exhibiting excellence in the area of public speaking, public relations or journalism. But did you know that these giants of our profession share something with the legendary Mr. Bartlett himself? Each owns a spot in the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame (IGHF).*



The IGHF dates back to 1989 and was the brainchild of IPGA member Patrick O'Brien, then director of golf at the Golf Club of Illinois. The original concept was to institute a means of recognizing and honoring the numerous accomplishments that Illinois golfers have made to the game. Initially known as the "Illinois PGA Hall of Fame," the name changed in 1997 to the current moniker, Illinois Golf Hall of Fame. This move was to acknowledge the significant role men and women have played in all aspects of the game, from teaching and playing, to course design, construction and management, to administration and inspiration.

The original selection committee comprised PGA professionals, allied association leaders and local media, and they outlined the guidelines for the new endeavor. The first class of inductees included golf legends Chick Evans, Joe Jemsek, architect Charles Blair Macdonald and the aforementioned Charles Bartlett. A new class of Hall of Fame members was selected annually until 1993, when the decision to induct biennially on the odd-numbered years was made.

At this time, the lobby of the Drake Hotel in Oak Brook displayed honoree plaques. The following year, the display moved to the Ruffled Feathers Golf Club in Lemont. In 2001, the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame followed the Illinois PGA's move north to Glenview and has a permanent home inside the clubhouse of The Glen Club.

The Glen Club affords the Hall of Fame with a beautiful and roomy setting to display the honoree plaques, photographs and memorabilia that help to paint each inductee's story. Even without clubs in tow, an afternoon at The

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Glen Club facility would be a worthwhile experience. On the walls of the clubhouse, the rich history of the game in our state is flushed out and its leaders identified. Since its inception, the IGHF has inducted some 58 individuals. In addition to the aforementioned, inductees have included noted players Tommy Armour and D.A. Weibring, longtime club professionals Hubby Habjan and Johnny Revolta, architects Robert Bruce Harris and Dick Nugent, and course builder Brent Wadsworth.

The IGHF's mission is to educate and entertain golf enthusiasts from all walks of life. I have been privileged to serve on the selection committee for the last three years and am the lone representative from the turf community. The 18-person selection committee currently consists of some of the area's leading golf professionals, allied association leaders and noted golf writers and is chaired by Bill Heald, the retired golf professional from the Riverside Golf Club and one of four inductees who serve on the committee.

For the upcoming class of 2005, nominations closed January 1. At a meeting in March, the selection committee members will take the list of very worthy candidates and pare the roster to 10 finalists. This is an arduous task, as a great deal of documentation has been assembled supporting each nominee in the form of newspaper clippings, magazine articles and the like. It should be noted that once nominated, candidates remain on the ballot for three elections (six years). With our roster of candidates at 10, we will meet again in April, when each remaining finalist will have a nomina-

tor present in person to further strengthen his or her candidate's case for induction. In the end, an inductee must be named on two-thirds of the ballots to be elected.

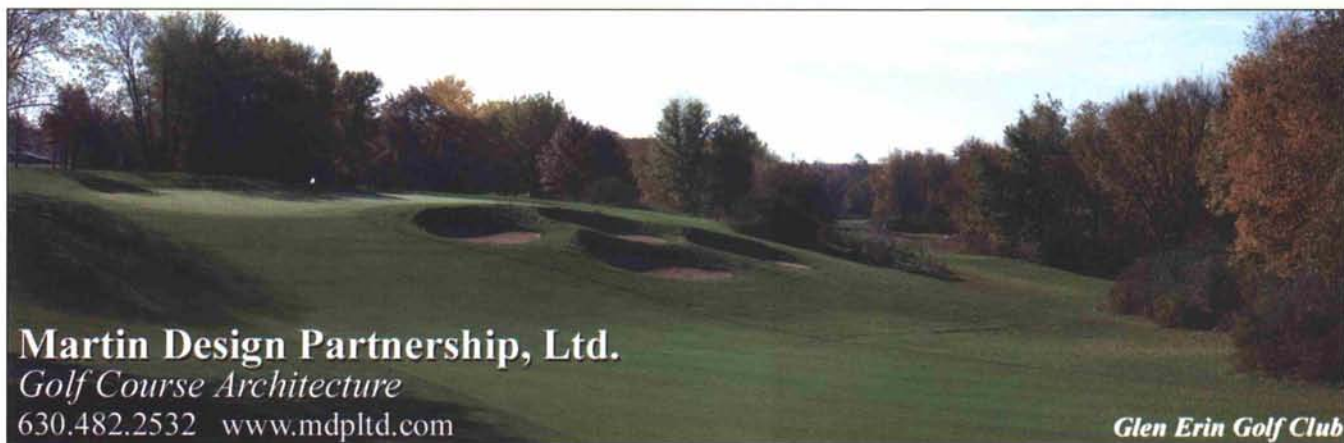
On behalf of the selection committee, I can say that we look forward to inducting a new class this fall. The ceremony is tentatively scheduled for October at The Glen Club. It is my hope that we can continue to include legends from our profession who have shaped the scope of our industry and the courses upon which our great game is played. In the meantime, plan a trip to The Glen Club before the season heats up. An afternoon there would be very educational and a great way to trace the deep history of golf in the Prairie State. 

*I would like to thank IPGA Foundation development director Rob Dauphinais for his substantial contributions to this article.*

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*The Hall of Fame's 2003 inductees (L to R): MAGCS member and Merit Club superintendent Oscar Miles, CGCS, joined by Bob Mendralla—a 50-year veteran of Wilson Sporting Goods known for innovative club design—and Joe Sisolak, who has dedicated his life to promoting junior golf and remains instrumental in The First Tee of North Eastern Illinois.*



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