

# Jim Nicol:

## I always had a special bond with my mom

BY LARRY AYLWARD

**M**arguerite Nicol was a meticulous mother who ran a tight ship when it came to managing her family's household in St. Cloud, Minn. Marguerite had four children, including Jim Nicol, her third-born child, who grew up to be the certified superintendent of Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn.

"I never remember our house being messy," Jim says. "My mother was a true homemaker. The windows were always clean and she made sure we were always dressed properly. We wore impeccably pressed shirts to school every day."

Not all the kids inherited their mother's spick-and-span gene, but Jim did. And that's a blessing for Jim, who has used that ability to tidy up the greens, tees and fairways that comprise his prized course, which hosted the PGA Championship in 2002 and will host it again in 2009.

"I'm a neat person," says the 53-year-old Nicol, in his ninth year at Hazeltine. "I always have shined shoes and clean clothes. I got that from her."

Marguerite, who grew up on a North Dakota farm, turns 85 this month and still lives in St. Cloud with her husband, Bob, who turned 90 in April. Marguerite is a

young 85, however, and even plays a little golf. (Bob is also very active.)

"I hope *that's* in the genes," Jim says of his parents' spryness.

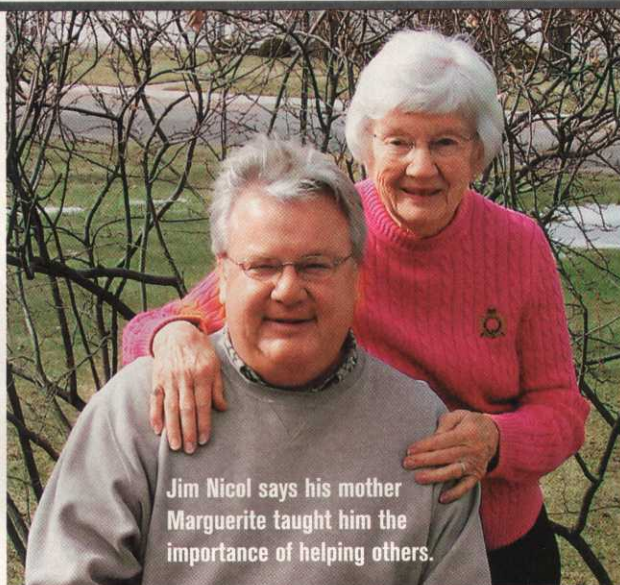
Jim says he always felt a special bond with his mother when growing up and still does. He could tell her about most anything on his mind and trust her to understand his problems. "I was close to my dad, too," Jim says, "but not like I was close to my mother."

Jim says his mom has a big heart and showed him how important it is to help others in need. When he was a child, Jim recalls a neighbor giving birth to triplets. The other moms in the neighborhood, including Marguerite, chipped in to buy the woman, Mrs. Jennings, a new clothes dryer.

"And they would go over her house every morning and every afternoon to fold diapers and drink coffee," Jim says.

Marguerite also taught Jim to be courteous and tolerant of others. For instance, Jim says he never called his parents' friends by their first names, although his friends' kids refer to him by his first name. "I don't mind it," Jim adds. "It's just a different generation."

Anybody who knows Jim knows he often takes a no-nonsense approach to certain matters and is not afraid to



Jim Nicol says his mother Marguerite taught him the importance of helping others.

express his opinion, even if it's unpopular. Jim says he acquired that distinction from his mother. "She's quiet, but she's very strong," he says.

Thanks in part to his mother, Jim says he lived a charmed childhood. It was a bit regimented and predictable but joyful nevertheless.

"We'd get up every morning and have breakfast," Jim says. "And mom would pack lunches. Then we'd go off to school."

The kids played after school, had dinner, did their homework (often with their mother's help) and went to bed. "We never stayed up late," Jim says.

Marguerite often prepared full sit-down dinners complete with dessert. Nicol says his mother is a terrific cook and baker. In fact, some of Nicol's fondest childhood memories

are raiding the freezer for his mom's special-recipe chocolate-chip cookies. Did any of his mother's cooking prowess rub off on him? "No, it just made me heavy," Jim says.

Jim is proud to call his mom a "true homemaker." That said, Jim says that full-time motherhood is a lost art these days because so many mothers have been forced into the workforce to help pay their families' bills.

"I don't begrudge women for working today, but it has made a difference in our society," he says.

Jim is thankful for himself and his siblings that Marguerite was at the center of their lives while they were growing up. She still is, says Jim, who sees his parents at least once every two weeks.

"She means the world to me," he says. ■