

On Course.

The News Magazine of First Tee – Connecticut
FALL 2024

Swinging into Life Skills: Our Mission to Empower Bridgeport's Youth through Golf

At First Tee – Connecticut, the game of golf is more than just sport; it's a gateway to life skills, resilience and self-confidence for young people. Jay Taylor, Site Coordinator at Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course, has been instrumental in expanding our reach, especially in Fairfield County, since we assumed responsibility in 2017. Taylor and his team focus on delivering impactful programs across Bridgeport schools, engaging hundreds of children who may never otherwise have encountered the sport.

For almost 15 years, First Tee – Connecticut has been delivering golf-based life lessons to Bridgeport students, primarily through our "In-School Program," a weeklong immersion for K-5 students.



First Tee Gym Class at Guilford Lakes School.

"Most of these kids have never played golf," Taylor explains. "So they love it because they get to hit something. It's a big thrill." Equipped with safe, adaptive gear—plastic SNAG clubs, tennis balls and targets—the program transforms gymnasiums and playgrounds into makeshift golf courses, where students can practice everything from putting to full swings. "We even have targets of different heights to accommodate the kids, and we say, 'It's time to break some windows!'" Taylor laughs, emphasizing the joy and excitement the program brings.

For many years, five or six Bridgeport elementary schools participated each year, thanks to supportive physical education teachers who recognized the program's value. However, a recent introduction by Bridgeport Caribe, a local youth organization led by Executive Director John Torres, connected the chapter with the district's Physical Education supervisor. The result? A major expansion to 15 schools as of winter 2024, with aspirations to reach all elementary schools in Bridgeport in the next several years. This growth reflects First Tee – Connecticut's dedication to making golf accessible while embedding critical life skills.

"We're not just teaching golf," Taylor stresses. "We're instilling values like discipline, resilience and believing in oneself. It's about helping these kids grow as individuals and as part of their community." Each activity aligns with First Tee's core values—honesty, respect, perseverance—and through structured play, kids gain so much more than golf skills. Taylor notes that some students even develop a genuine interest in the sport. "We usually see a couple of kids from each school signing up for outdoor lessons at Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course after the program," he says. "It's a fantastic opportunity for them to experience an actual

golf course and step outside their everyday environment."

Beyond the school year, our impact continues with summer outreach programs, which have returned to pre-COVID levels as of 2024. Partnerships with organizations such as Horizons at Sacred Heart, the Lighthouse Program, Cardinal Shehan Center and the McGivney Center allowed us to reach an additional 400 children in Bridgeport this summer. These summer programs are more than just fun—they reinforce our core values and give kids a productive, enriching experience during the break.

First Tee – Connecticut's outreach programs are offered free of charge, with scholarships and financial assistance available for group lessons to ensure cost doesn't prevent any child from participating. Taylor recalls an experience with a young girl who, after receiving a flyer, sadly noted she couldn't afford the \$65 program fee. "That broke my heart," he admits. "We do our best to make sure money isn't a reason a child can't join us."

Community support from educators and local organizations is essential to sustaining our growth in Bridgeport. As more schools participate, Taylor sees a brighter future. "We're starting to build real momentum within the school community," he observes. "It's a tremendous opportunity to introduce these kids to something they've never experienced before. It's more than learning golf—it's about growing up with the confidence and values that will carry them forward in life."

Through our work, Taylor and his team aren't just introducing kids to a new sport – they're cultivating a generation of young people who believe in themselves and their potential. The success of Fairchild Wheeler's programs and its expansion across Bridgeport highlights First Tee – Connecticut's commitment to empowering youth with skills and values that transcend the golf course. ■



(Top) In-School Program at Derynoski School, Southington.
(Bottom) Kids playing with SNAG equipment in our Waterbury Schools.

A message from Mark Moriarty, CEO



Another golf season, our 25th, has come and gone but as our time with participants and their families pauses until the New Year, there is still much excitement at First Tee - Connecticut to share with you!

Several members of our staff and board will soon attend the First Tee's Network Summit in Phoenix, AZ where we will be part of over 800 First Tee personnel who gather to celebrate the impact that our organization has on young people and to learn from one another so that we can continue to make an even more meaningful impact in our communities.

Locally, First Tee - Connecticut's leadership have made a commitment to and are exploring opportunities to create access for young people in lower Fairfield County, an area of the state where so many deserving young people live, yet where access to our programming is not available.

Our third season as the golf course operators at Goodwin Park Golf Course in Hartford was a true success with another year-over-year increase in participation among young people from the city. We are grateful to our partners from Hartford HealthCare for their strategic funding that allows us to positively impact so many children in the Hartford community.

The PGA TOUR's Travelers Championship yet again attracted a world class field to Cromwell this June and in the process, they also raised \$3.2M for local charities. Our chapter is so proud to be one of those charities and we are proud to partner with the Travelers Championship all year long.

Speaking of professional golf tournaments, the Epson Tour's Hartford HealthCare Women's Championship was contested for the second consecutive year and First Tee - Connecticut was the beneficiary of all ticket sales during the week.

These are just a few examples of the meaningful support that makes our chapter the success that it is! I wish to thank each and every one of our participants for their participation, all of our extraordinary coaches and volunteers for their time and our generous donors for their support of and belief in the work we do as a youth development organization. By seamlessly integrating the game of golf with our life skills curriculum, we create active learning experiences that build inner strength, self-confidence, and resilience that kids can carry to everything they do.

In this newsletter, you will surely enjoy reading about some of the incredible Game Changers who are part of First Tee - Connecticut. After you do, I hope you will be even more encouraged to continue being part of our community.

Wishing you a wonderful upcoming holiday season,

Mark Moriarty

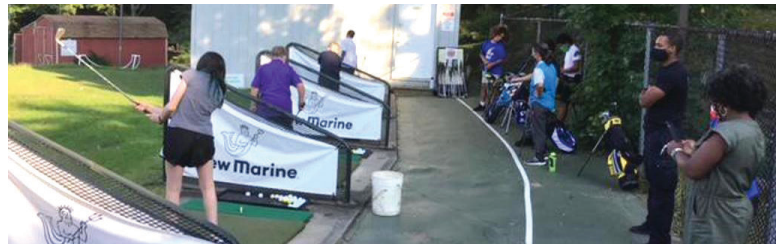
DONATE

CDW Awards Technology Grant to First Tee - Connecticut for Waterbury PAL Golf Facility

CDW, a multi-brand provider of information technology solutions, serves as a partner and key technology advisor to the PGA Tour. In 2022, CDW became a trustee of First Tee and works to support essential technology enhancements such as virtual coach training, and digital curriculums in underserved communities. With the support of CDW, First Tee began a multi-year program to modernize and enhance the organization where the lack of network connectivity creates barriers to our character-building programs reaching kids and families.

Another facet of the CDW partnership is chapter grants in select target markets such as Chicago and Detroit. These CDW grants support enhancements in technology equipment including devices, connectivity and security, and further their mission to advance digital equity across underserved First Tee communities.

This year, First Tee - Connecticut was thrilled to receive such a grant to improve access to First Tee programs for young people through the Waterbury Police Activity League (PAL), a partner of ours for more than fifteen years. PAL is a non-profit organization that promotes partnerships between youth, law enforcement and the community through educational and recreational programs designed to foster positive relationships and help kids reach their full potential.



(Top) Waterbury PAL Program at Prospect Range
(Bottom Left) Officer Vin and PAL Kids with Coach Mike.
(Bottom Right) Coach Anthony and student at Generali School, Waterbury.

Waterbury PAL operates their programming out of the Blasius Center, and they offered their supplemental building, known as the Paul V. Ciochetti Athletic Center, to First Tee - Connecticut as a space for a golf facility. Through the grant process, CDW graciously donated 12 Lenovo 500 Chromebook 2nd Generation computers, already installed at the Center. In addition, they awarded us two Golf Simulators from Full Swing which are going to be installed in January 2025!

With this facility we will be able to offer consistent programs throughout the year to our regular after-school PAL participants at East Mountain Golf Course and Prospect Range and to new young people in Waterbury. We are indebted to CDW for funding these technological enhancements at the Waterbury PAL facility, thereby providing access to connectivity and educational opportunities to participate in our First Tee - Connecticut programs and life skills curriculum. There is no doubt that this facility will significantly strengthen our ability to impact young people's lives in this underrepresented area that we serve. ■

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2024 Program Wrap-Up and Winter Preview

Our winter programs were highlighted by In-School golf instruction in over twenty elementary schools in Waterbury, Conn. and grew to fifteen elementary schools in Bridgeport, Conn. At our David and Geri Epstein Learning Center in Cromwell we hosted several Open House events, Trackman Family Play sessions and our long-standing Small Group Lessons in January, February and March 2024.

Summer Camp was sold out once again for each of our eight weeks from mid-June to mid-August, with our Girls Only and youth sessions for five and six-year-olds in high demand. Led by Camp Director, Anthony Bonelli, and Director of Instruction, Mike Cavalieri working together for the second consecutive year, campers enjoyed a fun-filled day of golf instruction, games, contests, lunch and arts and crafts. Our friends at Hartford HealthCare Bone & Joint Institute expanded their presence attending camp sessions weekly to introduce more stretching and strength exercises to our campers. Special thanks to Sarah Baribeau, Physical Therapist, for quarterbacking this important initiative!

First Tee - Connecticut values community partners such as the Hartford Marathon Foundation (HMF), that share our tenets regarding the importance of sports in youth development. HMF offers FitKids in School, promoting running as a function of a healthy lifestyle. At HMF's final FitKids event, Medal Day at Walnut Hill Park in New Britain in late October, our First Tee - Connecticut coaches operated a golf station as one of many healthy outdoor activities for over 700 kids! Thanks to our former colleague, Christy Miller, for including First Tee - Connecticut in this invigorating event for the last five years.

Our chapter was thrilled to host Level 3 National Coaches Training in September. We had twenty-four coaches and four trainers from across the country spend three beautiful days at the Learning Links, expanding their curriculum knowledge, networking with other coaches and preparing to deliver a lesson plan to student participants on the final day. Our Cromwell facility is now officially part of the coach training venue rotation designed by First Tee Headquarters, and we are excited to be hosting Level 2 National Coaches Training in September 2025.



(Left) Participants in First Tee's Community Outreach program at Covenant Prep., Hartford. | (Right) Summer Camp Staff Max Mutarelli, Director Anthony Bonelli, Libby Dunn, Avery Goyette, Coach Mike Cavalieri.

In March, we welcomed Payton Dorsch to our team as our new Assistant Program Director. Payton's love for the game started at Richter Park in Danbury and she has already made an impact on our program---coaching in Cromwell and greater Waterbury, handling lesson administration and implementing efficient program enhancements. We look forward to Payton expanding our LPGA Girls Golf program and continuing as a female role model at our Girls Golf clinics, including her efforts this summer at the Epson Tour Hartford Healthcare Championship in Milford, Connecticut.

In May, almost immediately after his college graduation, David Ramirez jumped right into summer as our Community Outreach



Summer Camp participants start the morning with stretching exercises led by staff from Hartford Healthcare's Bone & Joint Institute.

Coordinator, focused on serving our existing partners and creating new opportunities in the City of Hartford. David, who was our Summer Outreach Intern in 2023 for Fairfield and New Haven Counties, developed a deep understanding of our role in the Hartford community and built strong relationships in these few months, especially at Goodwin Park Golf Course, which is operated by First Tee - Connecticut. We look forward to Payton and David's continued contributions to our organization in the future!

The First Tee - Connecticut Life Skills Experience would not be nearly as effective and fun, without our exceptional coaching staff and volunteers, many of whom are Connecticut Section PGA members. We are grateful for and extremely proud of our seventy coaches who are currently making an impact on the young people in our program. Our chapter leaders continue to make a concerted effort to recruit coaches from outside the traditional golf instruction arena to grow a diverse perspective on our staff. Collectively, all our coaches are tremendous at connecting with our participants and Building Game Changers!



(Left) Board Members and 2024 Interns gather at the Patrons Breakfast in June during Travelers Week. | (Right) Beverly Buckner Baker and 2024 recipient of the Shepard W. Baker Memorial Scholarship, Katie Brandt.

Winter 2024 Golf

Despite winter temperatures in Connecticut limiting outdoor golf, First Tee - Connecticut continues to host indoor activities to engage our participants.

Keep an eye out on our website, www.firstteect.org, for an announcement before year end about how to reserve your tee time on our Trackman simulator for select weekends and school holidays at our David & Geri Epstein Learning Center in Cromwell. Trackman sessions are a great way for both parents and participants to sharpen their skills in the off-season and have fun with the family.

Our indoor Small Group Lessons will be offered again in January, February and March 2025 for students nine years and older of all levels who would like to work on their golf fundamentals. The registration dates and corresponding lesson schedules will be announced in mid-December. ■

2024 Scholarship Recipients:

19 Iron Scholarship (Downey Family Foundation)

Laniah Moffett

Aetna Retirees Scholarship in memory of H. Grant Thomas & Roger Lawson

Laniah Moffett

Selam Olson

Andrew K. Dwyer Foundation Scholarship

Matthew Conelius

Nicole Polites

Caleb Smith

Ethan Torres

Donald E. Vacheron Scholarship

Zarya Hernandez Salto

Meghna Mazumdar

Henry Hughes Scholarship

Emily Perrotta

Mazumdar Family Scholarship

Selam Olson

Epstein Family Scholarship

Gabriella Abastillas

Rolleen Sam Alzona

Daniel Asare

Nailah Asare

Ishaan Bafna

Benjamin Banton

Raphael Blocher

Luke Brower

Catherine Cruess

Thomas Cruess

Liv Hammer

Mario LaChance

Mathew Luponio

Christopher Mancini, Jr.

Arianna Owens

Joshua Raj

Katherine Regan

Luca Sousa

Leo Sparagna

William P. Lyons Scholarship

Patrick DiPace

Jay Vaughan

Shepard W. Baker Memorial Scholarship

Katie Brandt

2024 Charity Classics Wrap-up

We were blessed with incredible weather, venues and an abundance of players, donors and sponsors for our three First Tee – Connecticut Charity Classics in 2024!

Our season kicked off at the renowned Country Club of Fairfield on a stellar spring afternoon on May 28th for our Charity Classic with our incredible Title Sponsor, PwC. Always a big draw, the course did not disappoint, offering our 124 players excellent conditions, breath-taking views of Long Island Sound and great camaraderie as golfers and friends reunited for this classic event. We would like to thank PwC and First Tee – Connecticut Board Member Tim Bunt for their continued support and dedication making this Charity Classic so successful. Our friends and sponsor Tito's Handmade Vodka were on-course with their tent adding to the festivities while the C.C. of Fairfield chefs prepared a tremendous spread for our awards reception.

Raffle winners received new golf equipment, rounds



(Left) Tim Bunt, Jon Poling, Dan Guerra, Bryan Bunt at C.C. of Fairfield.
(Right) Michael Nashold, Greg Hickey, Matthew Mellen, and Weston Landreth from Title Sponsor Mastercard at Madison C.C..

of golf at exclusive clubs and tickets to prestigious sporting events. Katie Brandt, then a Senior at Fairfield Warde High School now attending University of South Florida, wowed the audience with her remarks summarizing her experiences with First Tee – Connecticut as a participant and later as a Volunteer Coach at Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course in Bridgeport. Thanks to all our contributing players and sponsors that enabled us to raise just over \$100,000 for First Tee – Connecticut youth across the state! Special thanks to Head Golf Professional Eric Steindel, General Manager Tim Minihan and their staff at C.C. of Fairfield for an extraordinary day.

Next, we traveled on September 17th to the beautiful Madison Country Club for our second Charity Classic sponsored by our long-standing First Tee – Connecticut and First Tee National partner, Mastercard. The day boasted brilliant sunshine and warmer temperatures for that time of the year, as evidenced by the summer golf attire and relaxed vibe on the spacious patio. Our friends at Links Drinks donated on-course beverages and our amazing caterer in Madison, What's Cookin', created a fantastic luncheon, charcuterie with accompanying appetizers and a mouthwatering dinner buffet with lots of homemade treats.

We were all astounded when one player won the first three items in the raffle, including a Callaway driver, trip for four to The Bay Hill Club with golf and a foursome at the Hartford Golf Club without having purchased a wealth of tickets. What are the odds?! Again, the pristine course conditions stole the show with 72 players enjoying the scenic water views, and challenging golf strategy the course demands. Our day would not have been as successful without our friends at Mastercard and the efforts of Board Members, Ted May, John Walsh, Dan Earle, and Marshall Ruben whose

firm, Ruben/Horan P.C., became our Presenting Sponsor. Thank you to Frank Carta, Head Golf Professional, Operations Manager Melissa Mathers and Madison C.C. member and First Tee – Connecticut supporter, Kieran Doherty for their efforts coordinating the event which netted just over \$61,000 for our children's youth programs.

Our third and final Charity Classic was close to home right next door at TPC River Highlands in Cromwell. Now in its third year, our First Tee – Connecticut Charity Classic in memory of Shepard W. Baker is presented by our Title Sponsor, Beverly Buckner Baker. Beverly, a First Tee – Connecticut Board Member and significant donor, works tirelessly on our behalf in the community spreading awareness, engaging new corporate partners, expanding our audience, and raising important dollars for us. She is deeply involved in the planning and execution of this tournament, a personal tribute to her late husband Shep, whose beliefs and values align perfectly with those of First Tee – Connecticut. Thank you, Beverly, for all that you do with this event and as a Diamond Sponsor of our PwC and Mastercard Charity Classics!

The 100 players in the field were treated to an exceptional fall day and immaculate playing conditions as they made their way around the notable TPC links in the scramble or shamble format. Several players in the field, Joe LaCava, caddy to PGA Touring Professional Patrick Cantlay, the amazing DJ Gregory from Walking for Kids Foundation and our loyal friend, Luke Doebele flew up to be with us and we are so appreciative! We were so proud to have our partner Hartford Healthcare (HHC) as a presenting sponsor of this Charity Classic, and excited to have Sarah Baribeau, DPT, and Titleist Performance Institute Level 3 provider on-site leading golf stretches and providing fitness guidance. Thanks to Tito's Handmade Vodka who was back with us as a sponsor on the 10th hole once again.

Our awards reception had more excitement with our special raffle winners announced and was capped off by moving remarks from Beverly Buckner Baker, and our First Tee – Connecticut Board Chair, Ken Baldwin. All enjoyed the delightful buffet prepared by the culinary team at TPC River Highlands! The day was seamless, and we would like to thank PGA Head Professional Ron Scheyd and his team and Sales & Catering Manager, Pam Moan and her staff for their assistance throughout the day making this Charity Classic so spectacular. Thanks to all our generous sponsors and donations, we were able to raise over \$90,000 to support our youth development programs.

Of special note, we would like to acknowledge our friends Joe Gantert and PURE Insurance as Gold sponsors in each of the three Charity Classics and all our other generous multi-event Gold sponsors. We couldn't do this without you all and can't wait to see you in 2025! ■



(Left) Dave Steffan, Scot Haney, Beverly Buckner Baker and Linda Houde at TPC. | (Right) Dawn Lazarus, Annie Lazarus, Falguni Patel and Lynn Rossini of Htfd Healthcare, Presenting Sponsor at TPC River Highlands.

Laniah Moffett Shines at First Tee National Championship

For Laniah Moffett of Waterbury, participating in the First Tee National Championship at Clemson University was not just about the competition; it was a testament to her journey and dedication to the sport she loves. The prestigious event gathers 48 of the nation's top junior golfers, with candidates selected based on their involvement in local chapters, essays, character, grades, and handicap indexes.

Moffett, who started with First Tee – Connecticut at the age of five, has been playing golf for 12 years. Now attending Howard University and playing on the Division 1 Women's Golf Team, she reflects on how the program shaped her. "When I was 15, I began helping as an assistant coach at Prospect Golf Course and East Mountain in Waterbury," she shares. "I also participated in Golf Shows representing First Tee – Connecticut to give back to the program that has done so much for me."

Competing at Clemson this year, Moffett found the experience both challenging and rewarding. "It was amazing meeting people

from across the country," she says. "Adjusting to the greens and the different grass types was part of the challenge, but it helped me grow as a golfer."

One of the highlights of the championship for Moffett was the "Careers in Golf" panel, which opened her eyes to opportunities in turf management, college coaching, and more. "A lot of golfers aren't sure what they want to do, but this opened up so many possibilities for me," she explains.

Looking ahead, Moffett dreams of turning professional and eventually owning a youth

coaching business. "I want to go pro and then give back to the younger generation," she states. Her dedication to First Tee – Connecticut and its core values of perseverance, respect, and community remains a driving force.

In her first semester, Moffett has notched two top ten finishes and competed at the illustrious St. Andrews Golf Club in Scotland. She exemplifies what First Tee programs aim to achieve: nurturing young talent and instilling values that go beyond the golf course. Her story is a testament to perseverance, community, and the unwavering support of First Tee. ■



Laniah Moffett focuses in on a chip shot during the First Tee National Championship at Clemson University in July.

Golf and Growth: Will Berthiaume's Unforgettable Experience at First Tee Game Changers Academy

For Will Berthiaume, participating in The First Tee Game Changers Academy was a life-changing experience. "I want to thank First Tee and First Tee – Connecticut for this incredible opportunity and experience creating memories that will last a lifetime," he shared, reflecting on the program's profound impact.

Surrounded by inspiring people and thought-provoking seminars, Berthiaume formed meaningful connections with other teens, such as Samuel Carbajal and Reagan Calaguas from California. "Samuel was a great roommate and an amazing friend to work with during the seminars," Berthiaume recalled. Discussions on diversity, inclusion, and belonging challenged and inspired him, fostering personal growth.

A seminar by high school basketball coach David Collier stood out to Berthiaume. "He talked about how to set goals and the steps to achieve them," he said. The insights resonated deeply, aligning with his involvement in community initiatives like Meriden's annual Community Trash Cleanup.

Another impactful session at TopGolf emphasized Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I). Berthiaume noted, "What I got out of this seminar is that you should stay true to who you are, no matter if you're included or not." The message of authenticity and respect left a lasting impression.

Beyond seminars, the program included engaging activities like an 18-hole scramble at Theodore Wirth Golf Course in St. Paul, Minn. "I made several new friends from across the country," he shared. "The course was in great condition, and I'm grateful for the experience."

Reflecting on his time at the Academy, Berthiaume concluded, "I made so many memories between great friendships, learning about leadership, and discovering how to make a positive impact on my Meriden community." His journey highlights the transformative power of the First Tee Game Changers Academy in shaping young leaders. ■



Will Berthiaume at the Theodore Wirth Golf Course, Minn. in July during the 2024 Game Changers Academy.

With tremendous gratitude to each of the organizations and individuals who have held fundraisers in 2024 to benefit First Tee – Connecticut:

- 6th Annual John Romano Golf Tournament
- The Bongiorno Golf League
- Connecticut Retail Network
- Elite Fundraising Solutions for PGA Hope events at GP
- Final Final Open
- The Gary Gatzert Memorial
- Gaylord Specialty Healthcare
- Grassy Hill Country Club's Men's Association
- Let's Grab Lunch Inc
- Mastercard Employee Golf Outing
- The Mike Mancini Invitational
- Mikey Conroy Foundation Inc.
- Orange Hills Country Club Men's Golf Association
- PGA TOUR Charity Challenge
- Redding CC Longest Day Marathon
- Ron Booth Mission Golf Outing
- Sharon Country Club Marathon
- Silvermine Road Trippers
- Sine Die Cup
- Texas Roadhouse
- Dave Rand Memorial Sooners
- Yusen Associates
- Keney Links Women's Golf Club
- Blue Fox Run Women's Golf Group
- Max Golf Classic

Warren Beardow: 2024 Walter Shelton Coach of the Year



In 2023, First Tee – Connecticut established the Walter Shelton Coach of the Year Award in memory of our dear friend and coach who passed in early 2022. We are proud to have Warren Beardow as the second person honored with this distinction. Warren's qualities are like Coach Walter in so many ways. He strives to connect with each young individual he is teaching to find the right

words to ignite that "AHA" moment in their golf journey. Warren attests that in every class there is always knowledge imparted, or a way of helping a child that makes him love coaching. Golf is a difficult sport demanding many types of clubs and shots and it can become overwhelming to a youngster as they are learning the game. Warren looks for a way to simplify the process and relate to each of his students to make their development in the game more enjoyable.

For over a dozen years, Warren Beardow has been coaching kids from ages 7-18 at First Tee – Connecticut primarily at our flagship location in Cromwell CT, and various other facilities around the state. Coach Warren is always there on the practice tee, putting green or the golf course with the right words of encouragement, a gentle arm around a shoulder, and a smile doing his best to engage, inspire and motivate the kids looking for their next great shot. At 86 years young, Warren is asked frequently by his friends why he is spending his time instructing young kids. His response is quite simple- because he has so much fun! Warren goes on to explain that it is the kids' smiles and their excitement that are his great reward. Humble and soft-spoken, Warren is extremely modest about the enormous impact he has made on countless kids in our communities, teaching golf and sharing valuable life lessons to assist in their future. He is aware from parent interactions over the years just how kids rely on these life skills and incorporate the core values at school, socially and even in their adult careers.

We are beyond grateful for Warren's enormous accomplishments and dedication to First Tee – Connecticut representing our organization with grace, intelligence, class, and humor. With no signs of slowing down, we look forward to more years of having Warren teaching golf and life lessons to our young people. We value his contributions and are honored to recognize Warren with pride as 2024 Walter Shelton "Coach of the Year". ■



Henry Hughes Honored for Life-Long Contributions to Connecticut Golf and First Tee – Connecticut

In 2024, Connecticut native Henry Hughes, co-chairman of the 1975 Sammy Davis Jr. Greater Hartford Open (GHO) and long-time executive with the PGA TOUR, was honored for his many contributions to the tournament and local golf with the establishment of a scholarship fund in his name at First Tee – Connecticut. The Henry Hughes First Tee – Connecticut Scholarship supports various educational needs of deserving First Tee – Connecticut participants, as well as select programming needs of the organization in the Greater Hartford community.

Hughes grew up in Wethersfield, Conn. and spent his youth and early adult life working at and eventually managing the Greater Hartford Open (GHO). In 1984, Hughes began his career with the PGA TOUR as Director of Marketing for TPC River Highlands and two years later moved to TOUR headquarters in FL to become the TOUR's first Director of Marketing. Hughes later assumed responsibility for the TOUR's Championship Management and Tournament Business Affairs Division, overseeing 13 prestigious tournaments.

Hughes never forgot his roots and deep affection for Connecticut's PGA TOUR event and played a significant role in 2003 when he helped save the tournament after the departure of long-time title sponsor Canon, USA. In his retirement, Hughes served for many years on the Greater Hartford Community Foundation which oversees the Travelers Championship.

Ted May, long-time tournament board member and one of the founders of First Tee – Connecticut added, "Without Henry's guidance and support in those very challenging years, we might not have remained on the PGA TOUR or at the very least, would be a very different tournament than we are today. Often behind the scenes, Henry was a major advocate for Connecticut's PGA TOUR event and was instrumental with building Connecticut's First Tee chapter into what it has become today."



During his many years and positions with the TOUR, Hughes played significant roles in developing and advising on the growth of the First Tee national program, including the First Tee – Connecticut in Cromwell. He became a strong advocate of the First Tee's mission having witnessed the positive influence it has on the lives of young people.

Since the Scholarship's inception in April of this year, First Tee – Connecticut has received twenty four gifts totaling \$28,250. Donations to the Scholarship Fund in honor of Henry Hughes can

be made online, by mail to 55 Golf Club Road in Cromwell, CT 06416 or by phone at (860) 882-1660 with reference to the Henry Hughes First Tee – Connecticut Scholarship. ■