

**ASSISTANT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR**

*This award bestows special recognition on an assistant professional who, through a commitment to improving opportunities for assistants, has distinguished himself/herself in service to the Section, his/her peers and facility.*

**CHRISTOPHER J. KENNEY - Bethesda Country Club**

Chris Kenney, First Assistant at Bethesda CC in Bethesda, MD earned his PGA membership in 1996; however, he is already building a reputation throughout the section for being a true leader. He began his golf career in 1992 at the Pittsburgh Field Club in Pittsburgh, PA. In 1994 he was hired as an Assistant at Bethesda CC, where he trained under MAPGA Past President, Jim Folks through the 1996 season. Looking to further his career, Chris took a position at Sleepy Hollow CC in Scarborough on Hudson, NY, where he worked and learned under the tutelage of Jim O'Mara, who was also the District 2 Director of the PGA of America. During his very successful year there, he developed a Junior Golf Program and was charged with overseeing the staff and the operation of the facility. At the end of that season Chris was given, *"one of the highest compliments I have received in my career. Mr. Folks contacted me and asked if I would consider returning to Bethesda CC to be the Head Assistant."* Since 1998 Chris has worked closely with Jim Folks, managing the golf operation for the members of Bethesda CC, and teaching more than 300 golf lessons annually.

Upon returning to the Middle Atlantic Section, Chris immediately sought ways to become involved in his association. After attending one meeting he was asked to serve as the Membership Chair of the APA which, through the combined efforts of Chris and others, has realized a 25% increase in membership. In 1999, he was asked to serve as Vice President of the APA. Also in 1999, Chris was elected by the MAPGA Central Chapter to serve as the A-8 Director on the Central Chapter Board of Directors. Chris volunteers his time as a section rules official and has expressed a desire to become a PAT examiner.

Chris grew up in Paramus, NJ, where he lived with his parents, Joseph and Susan Kenney, and sister Laura. His strong value system and leadership traits were evident early, when he was elected as an Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America. He was introduced to the game of golf at age 14 by his grandfather, who taught Chris the basics and then gave him a copy of Ben Hogan's *"Power Golf"* to study. His grandfather's encouragement and enthusiasm influenced Chris's decision to play the game. The two people who influenced his decision to take the game more seriously and to turn professional are Bill Adams (Head Professional at Ridgewood CC in Paramus, NJ) and Brendan Walsh (Head Professional at The Country Club in Brookline, MA). Chris became a professional golfer in 1992 after graduating from Susquehanna University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business. He was a member of the university's golf team which won the MAC Conference Championship during Chris's senior year. Following graduation from college, Chris worked at the Pittsburgh Field Club, in Pittsburgh, PA, and at the Bonita Bay Club in Bonita Springs, FL during the 1992 winter season. In 1994 he moved to Maryland and went to work at Bethesda CC. He earned his PGA membership in 1996.

Chris's personal philosophy: *"I just try to be myself. Don't ever try to be someone that you are not, just to impress someone or land a job."* His keys to success: *"Attention to detail is a must; write things down and don't be afraid to ask for help, be a part of the team. Get involved! There are enough opportunities for people to get involved and help build the future of their facility and their association. Don't sit on the sidelines!"* Another vital element to Chris's success is his wife of six years, Stacie. According to Chris, *"I could not have achieved the level of success that I have without Stacie's love and support, and I know that she will continue to support me as I grow in my profession."*

This conscientious attitude towards his personal development, and the development of his association and its members has already earned Chris wide-range respect. He sets an excellent example for all assistants who want to travel the path of success.

Chris and Stacie reside in Gaithersburg, MD, with their dog, Hogan.