

**DAVID WORTMAN CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

*This award bestows special recognition on an outstanding amateur,  
whose contributions to golf in the mid-Atlantic region include the promotion of the game,  
the Middle Atlantic Section and its professionals, and overall support of MAPGA programs  
and golf throughout the region.*

**Clyde Luther**  
**Honorary MAPGA Member**  
**MAGA, VSGA, USGA**

Clyde was born in Hooper, Nebraska, to loving parents, Ernest and Marguerite Luther. He grew up in this “small town USA” with his two older brothers, Ernest and Clark, and sister, Dorothy. Clyde was always an outgoing youngster, invariably “out front” and into some form of entertaining. He was the bandleader in his 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class; while in high school, Clyde was in numerous theater productions and played the drums in a local community dance band. Clyde was also the President of his Senior Class. He Graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1951 with a B.S. in Education, majoring in Speech and minoring in Radio Broadcasting (also earning an AAA Degree). Clark, 5 years older, had the biggest career influence on Clyde because he had gone into the military to become a pilot and then flew commercially. While attending college, Clyde had taken two years of R.O.T.C. and shortly after graduation was accepted into Air Force Cadet Flying School #53A at Enid Air Force Base (AFB) near Ardmore, Oklahoma. This may be hard to believe, but, it was not until the age of 23 that Clyde Luther was introduced to the game of golf by some of his close pilot friends who had played in college.

Upon graduating from flight school, Clyde received his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force and was assigned to Sewart AFB just outside of Nashville, Tennessee. It was in Nashville where one of Clyde’s fellow officers introduced him to Claudette Wilson. After about a year at Sewart AFB, Clyde was transferred to Donaldson AFB near Greenville, South Carolina where he flew C-119 cargo aircraft that carried, among other things, Army paratroopers. Clyde and Claudette were married in March, 1954. A few months later Clyde was reassigned to Clarke AFB in the Philippine Islands where he was joined by Claudette in the early Fall. His unit was deactivated shortly thereafter so Clyde took the initiative, as anyone who knows him might imagine, to find another assignment. Because he had an educational background in broadcasting and had always enjoyed entertaining, Clyde conceived, constructed, and then became the Station Manager for the Armed Forces Radio Service Television Station (AFRS/TV), the first television station ever located in the Philippines Islands. In 1955, he and Claudette returned to the United States and settled in Northern Virginia where both of Clyde’s brothers were living (Ernest was a pharmacist and Clark was a pilot for Capital Airlines). Clyde completed his Air Force tour of duty and started flying for Capital Airlines, again following in his brother’s footsteps. In 1961, Capital and United Airlines (UAL) merged, so the two brothers were now both pilots for UAL. Clyde was a member of the pilots’ union negotiating team and became very interested in the wording of contracts. This turned out to be the beginning of his interest in the specific wording used in the rules of golf! He also conceived and started a speakers’ bureau (there is that entertaining thing again!) that featured pilots and flight attendants making presentations to the public on the training airline personnel received and various other aspects of the industry. During Clyde’s 33½ year career (retired in 1989) as a commercial pilot he flew the following aircraft: DC-3, DC-4, DC-6, DC-7, Vickers Viscount (turboprop), Boeing 737, and Boeing 727.

While flying for UAL in the late 1960’s, Clyde would frequently have a layover in Norfolk where the flight crews were lodged at the Lake Wright Motel, adjacent to the Lake Wright G.C. It was here that he met PGA professional, Claude King (this evening’s MAPGA Hall of Fame Inductee). Claude enjoyed Clyde and his compatriots and, of course, encouraged them to play golf. He even made arrangements to set aside a few special sets of clubs for the pilots to use whenever they were in town. To this day, Clyde and his friends remember and appreciate the warm hospitality provided by Claude King and his staff.

Clyde’s first golf-related “job” was as the Green Chairman at Springfield Golf and Country Club in 1966. He contends that his only accomplishments in golf are strictly rule-related. Since he has played a more

than respectable game of golf over the years (as low as an 11 handicap) it is difficult at best to determine if the word “strictly” is appropriate, but, there is no question that Clyde’s selfless service and accomplishments in the “rules arena” are almost beyond comprehension. The rules “thing” really began when he was made Chairman of the Junior Golf Committee at Springfield G & CC in the late 1960's. The responsibilities of this position and the potential for influencing so many young golfers, combined with Clyde’s attention to detail as well as his ability to entertain, led him toward becoming the rules expert and teacher he is today. He has officiated at 88 national championships (at last count), taught literally countless rules schools and seminars, and served in leadership positions of golf associations on a seemingly continuous basis. A partial list of Clyde’s service in leadership positions and rules officiating duties is included at the end of this biographical sketch.

In 1999 he was presented the Virginia State Golf Association’s highest honor, the President’s Award for over 25 years of service to golf in Virginia. Clyde is the main force behind the annual series of five, one-day VSGA/MAPGA Rules Seminars given throughout Virginia. In addition, and at the request of head PGA professionals throughout Virginia and Maryland, Clyde gives numerous rules seminars tailored to individual clubs. He has also volunteered his time on many occasions every year to officiate at MAPGA Championships. These occasions are particularly noteworthy because he serves as a mentor to the MAPGA rules officials on site. Clyde was made an Honorary Member of the MAPGA in 1995, the first person in five years to be so honored.

More important than any of the previous information and accolades written of here, is the manner in which Clyde has been able to influence the hearts and minds of an untold number of junior golfers. One just has to witness first-hand his work at the Bobby Bowers Memorial Junior Championship, the Virginia High School Championships, or any of the myriad of other venues to better appreciate his contributions. The respect the junior golfers have for Clyde is exceeded only by the respect and care that he returns to them. His dedication, passion and enthusiasm for this greatest of games and how it is to be played is truly unsurpassed. It is also clear that an equal number of adults have been “infected” by Clyde’s love, drive and exuberance for golf and what it teaches us about ourselves and others. He strongly believes that the game of golf can make someone a better person, especially if it can be made an early part of that person’s upbringing.

Claudette, Clyde’s wife and best friend for the past 47 years, has been a truly stalwart supporter of him and all of his various activities for all of those years. In the early 1960's, when Clyde was gone 4-to-5 days a week negotiating for the union and working on the airline merger committee, it was Claudette that orchestrated the home front. Clyde quickly gives her the “credit” for why their children turned out so well. Claudette’s support of Clyde continues to this day as you will find her at the Bobby Bowers Junior Championship or some other event, doing registration, selling lunch or raffle tickets, and generally solving any number of problems before they become a crisis!

Clyde and Claudette reside in Burke, Virginia. Their family includes: Lisa Leighty (airline customer service agent), her husband, David, and their two daughters, Melissa and Meredith who live in Orlando, Florida; daughter Sandy Acton (Intermediate school math teacher and coach) and her two children, A.J. and Kristi living in Wimberly, Texas; Mark (Physical Education teacher and baseball coach at Hayfield High School in Alexandria, Virginia), his wife, Brooke, and their twin one year old daughters, Kelsey and Riley; and Mike (United Airlines Pilot) his wife, Kim and their two year old son, Davis - Kim is currently pregnant with their second child. Clyde and Claudette are particularly proud of two other recent honors bestowed upon their family; their son, Mark, and their daughter, Sandy, both received the 2000-2001 Teacher of the Year awards at their respective schools!

A Partial list of Clyde's service to the golf community:

Rules Official

14 U.S. Opens

12 U.S. Senior Opens

14 U.S. Amateurs

13 U.S. Senior Amateurs

4 U.S. Women's Opens

4 U.S. Mid Amateurs

20 U.S. Junior Amateurs

1 Masters

3 Presidents Cup

3 U.S. State Team Championships

9 NCAA Championships

27 Bobby Bowers Junior Championships

Dozens of others: ACC, VSGA, MAGA, MAPGA, colleges, juniors, etc.

Service and Honors

Past President, Springfield Golf and Country Club, 1971

Past President, Virginia Club Association

Past President, Virginia State Golf Association, 1985-86

Past President, Middle Atlantic Golf Association, 1996

Junior Championship Committee, United States Golf Association, 1982-present

Teaching Staff, USGA/PGA Rules Schools, 1992-present

Honorary Member, Middle Atlantic PGA Section, 1995

Virginia State Golf Association Presidents's Award, 1999

Rules Committee Chairman, Virginia State Golf Association, 1981-present

Rules Committee Chairman, Middle Atlantic Golf Association, 1990-present

Head Rules Official, NCAA Division I Championships, 2001-present

Coordinator, Regional (3) NCAA Championships, 2001-present