

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

This award bestows special recognition on an individual whose tireless effort, unwavering dedication, and exceptional contributions to the game of golf result in significant benefit to the Middle Atlantic Section, its members and apprentices, and to the entire golf community. The Section President personally selects the outstanding recipient of this award.

Frank J. Laber, PGA - Black Horse Golf and Learning Center

Frank Laber has distinguished himself among his fellow professionals as a member dedicated to promoting the game of golf and the PGA professional. The four-time recipient of the Section's Bill Strausbaugh Award (1988, '90, '91, '95) has dedicated his career to improving the financial stability of the golf professional. Recognizing a need for employment support for MAPGA professionals, Frank played a pro-active role in establishing the position of the PGA's first section Employment Director in 1990. This position was later modeled by the PGA in creating the same position at the national level. The creation of this position within the section was the foundation for the career services offered and the employment database that is used in the section today.

Frank believes that along with the honor that comes with being a PGA Head Professional, there also comes a responsibility to mentor others to realize their potential in the profession. He was awarded the section's Horton Smith Trophy in 1987 for his efforts as an educator and has continued over the years to play an important role in the section's education programs. Promoting the game through sharing knowledge, developing human relations skills, improving playing proficiency, and keeping current with education and certification requirements are some of the most important lessons he teaches new apprentices. Frank can proudly reflect on the success of many of his former assistants who were inspired by his methods and continue in the same tradition.

Born in Baltimore, MD, in 1947, the only child of Frank and Eleanor Laber, Frank is well-known in the Baltimore/Washington area. His wife of 21 years, Susan, reports, "I've never been to any sporting event in Baltimore of any kind when there were not at least 15 people who stopped Frank at some point on the way in with, *Hey Frankie, how are ya doing?*" Frank enjoys all sporting events, and is most particularly an avid fan of the "Fighting Irish" Notre Dame football team. He began playing golf as a youngster and was well-known at Clifton Park GC and Mt. Pleasant GC. Later, he and his mentor and best friend for the past 20+ years, Coleman Plecker, could often be found at Carroll Park GC. In keeping with the true "Baltimore son" that he is, Frank attended the University of Baltimore.

Frank became a PGA member in 1977 and has a long history of service to the MAPGA, including serving on the section's Membership, Tournament and Employment committees in some capacity since 1982. He was Chairman of the MAPGA Membership Committee in 1984-85, and Chairman of the MAPGA Employment Committee from 1986 - 1995. In 1989, he was elected President of the Northern Chapter, and in 1992-93, he served as Vice President of the Northern Chapter. He has been the Northern Chapter Director-at-Large since 1998. Frank has also been active on a national level, serving on the PGA Education Committee in 1984-85, and from 1986-91 a member of the PGA Employment Committee. One of Frank's proudest career accomplishments is earning Master Professional status in 1996. Just as in the game of golf, the commitment to achieve this status reflected a challenge to surpass one's own level of mastery; and Frank eagerly accepted the challenge. Another of Frank's challenges was in pursuing his dream to create and own a facility for people of all ages and playing ability to learn, practice, and enjoy the game of golf. Frank accepted this challenge and realized his dream in 1999. Following 18 years

as the Head Golf Professional at Long View GC and a year at Hereford Golf Center, Frank is now the co-owner and manager of Black Horse Golf and Learning Center in Whitehall, MD.

Frank has been married for 21 years to his wife, Susan, who says Frank is her favorite "All World" PGA Master Professional. Susan, who's own career as an educator has completely opposite seasons from the golf professional's says, *"Being married to a golf professional has its challenges, especially the impact of the job on family time. But the benefits of a life with Frankie Laber outweigh those challenges. He is a smart, caring, and generous man who is principled and committed to doing the right thing for other people, sometimes, even at his own expense. Waking up each morning and seeing that smiling, happy, grin reminds me every day what a lucky woman I am."* For his dedication and contributions to the golf profession and to PGA professionals, the MAPGA also feels very lucky to have Master Professional Frank Laber as one of its most respected members and this year's recipient of the President's Award.