

MERCHANDISER OF THE YEAR

These awards bestow special recognition on those PGA members who have demonstrated superior skills as merchandisers in the promotion of golf. This award is given for excellence in golf shop operations in three categories: Private, Resort, and Public/Municipal/Military/Semi-Private.

Public Category

H. BROOKS GERARDI - RedGate Municipal Golf Course

With approximately 60,000 rounds and 90 outings played annually, and clientele as varied as the merchandise he carries in his shop, Head PGA Professional at RedGate Municipal GC in Rockville, MD, Brooks Gerardi, keeps his inventory on the move. At least once during the year, all his merchandise turns over. Brooks finds that buying some closeouts and mixing them in with the regular stock is effective in his successful operation. By mixing the two, he can lower prices and avoid taking losses. Due to the additional mark up on closeouts, Brooks frequently offers sales such as *"BUY TWO, GET THE THIRD ONE FREE."* Another way he increases his bottom line is to take advantage of all possible discounts, including all anticipation discounts, by paying for his merchandise ahead of the scheduled due dates. Through frequent changing of displays and rotation of items from one area to another, he achieves the appearance of fresh merchandise arrival. Brooks also relies heavily on the use of mannequins to provide customers with a total outfit look, which he finds results in more multiple sales. Brooks sells a large volume of golf balls, so he displays them throughout the shop as well as in front of the counter. For the impulse buyer, balls are also displayed on top of the counter. Another key element to Brooks' success is customer service. During the season, he insists upon someone being on the floor at all times to ensure that merchandise displays are kept neat and, most importantly, to provide customers with personal service. This eases the stress of decision making and makes his customers feel they have their own private/personal shopper. With the help of another staff member, Brooks' wife, Bettie, usually provides this service along with ordering merchandise and setting up displays. Brooks and his three assistants work in shifts so that there are two people behind the counter at all times.

Brooks grew up in Putnam, CT with his parents Henry and Doris Gerardi and one sister. The entire Gerardi family played golf. Brooks' father, also a PGA golf professional, taught him to play golf when he was just four years old! His uncle was recognized as the Best Amateur in Connecticut in 1950 and all his cousins were fair players as well. Brooks' first golf-related job was when he was a mere six years old! He worked as a caddy at Putnam CC in Putnam, CT where his father was Head Golf Professional. From age 11 through high school he worked for his father at Norbeck CC in Rockville, MD. In 1968 Brooks earned his PGA membership and worked as an Assistant at Norbeck CC until 1971 when he took a position at Northwest Park Golf Course. He remained there until accepting the Head Professional position at RedGate GC in 1974.

Because of his very successful career as a golf professional, Brooks was recently awarded a 25 Year Service Award for Distinguished Service to the City of Rockville, MD. He attributes his success to his personal philosophy for living, *"Have a set of rules and values and do not break them. Treat each player who comes into your shop as your best customer, and most of all — always try to say and do the right thing."*

Brooks and Bettie reside in Rockville, MD. They have two adult children, Kelley Ann and Walter, and four grandchildren.