

HORTON SMITH AWARD

This award bestows special recognition on a PGA Professional for outstanding service and contributions toward developing and improving educational opportunities for PGA Professionals and apprentices.

Bernard Najar, PGA

Woodholme Country Club, Baltimore, Maryland

Bernie was born December 31, 1971 in Bethesda, Maryland to Andre and Bernadette Najar. Growing up in a large family with siblings Cathy, Isabelle, Helene, Carolyn, Valerie, and Kenny made it easy for him to feel comfortable doing things on his own. Bernie grew up playing a great deal of tennis along with other sports before playing golf. His father was a tremendous tennis player, and was on the Egyptian Davis Cup Team in 1946 and played at Wimbledon in 1948.

Bernie began playing golf at age 13 when he skipped tennis camp to attend his first junior golf clinic at Kenwood Country Club with head PGA Professional Rod Thompson. Rod and his staff at the junior clinics made Bernie's introduction to golf a fun experience. The thrill of playing a new sport and the challenge of hitting the ball to a distant target encouraged him to play more.

Bernie caddied at Bethesda Country Club under the tutelage of Jim Folks, PGA and worked at Las Vegas Golf and Tennis during his senior year at Walt Whitman High School. He was selected to the All-Metropolitan Golf Team in 1988-1990. After his high school graduation in 1990, Bernie attended The American University on a golf scholarship and graduated in 1994 with a BSBA degree in Finance.

In 1994, Bernie went to work at The Suburban Club of Baltimore County in Pikesville, Maryland. In 1995, he was hired by The Staples Corporation to teach PGA Professional Charlie Staples' son, Whit Staples, full time in Florida. During the summer, when Whit was traveling to tournaments, Bernie taught lessons at Montclair Golf, Tennis, and Swim Club in Montclair, Virginia. In the Spring of 1996, Bernie joined the staff at Woodholme Country Club in Baltimore, Maryland as a teaching professional. He completed The PGA's Golf Professional Training Program in 1998, at which time he was elected to PGA membership.

Since 2000, Bernie has been recognized by Golf Digest in their "Best Teachers in State" listing, and since 2007, listed in Golf Magazine as "Top Teacher in the Region." This is his second award received from the Middle Atlantic PGA, his first was in 2004 as Teacher of the Year. He has been a speaker at the MAPGA Teaching Summit on Advanced Teaching Techniques and also recently launched his own website, www.parsavers.com.

Bernie has received certifications in Fitness Instruction through Greg Rose's Advantage Golf Programs Level 1 and Level 2 and has received his Titleist Performance Institute (TPI) Junior Certification in January of 2011.

Bernie's success as a PGA Professional is a result of loving his job and being self-motivated to develop and improve his skills as a teacher and as a player. He loves learning new skills and has been very fortunate to learn from some of the best players, teachers, fitness experts, and business owners in the golf industry. In addition, Bernie's wife Susan, and the members at Woodholme Country Club have always been extremely supportive of his work as a PGA Professional. Bernie's always thinking about how he can make his business run more efficiently. He loves learning and implementing the latest technology into his instruction program toward helping his students learn with greater ease.

Bernie and Susan have been married for eight years and have three dogs that they love very much, Emma, Maggie and Elvis.

Bernie has been very helpful in sharing his teaching talents with his fellow members. Whether at official seminars or Teaching Summits, or just offering informal advice on the phone, Bernie really believes in education. In his field of expertise, Golf Instruction, there is always some things to learn and to share.