

MAPGA Golf Professional of The Year

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

Golf Professional of the Year, Master Professional Frank Laber, epitomizes the ideals of sportsmanship, ethical behavior, and the mission of the MAPGA. His enthusiastic spirit, loyalty, and selfless service toward promoting the game of golf and the PGA professional are extraordinary and undisputed.

This 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 of America's first Section Employment Director in 1990. The creation of this position within the Middle Atlantic Section was the foundation for the career services being offered and the employment database that is used in the Section today. Frank's initiative to establish the position of Employment Director on the Section level subsequently evolved into a National effort, impacting the entire structure of The PGA and **all** of its members! As a result of Frank's inspiration, positive systemic changes have taken place to improve employment opportunities, the financial well being, and the negotiating climate toward enhancing the status and lifestyle of today's PGA professional.

Frank Laber 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 that same tradition today.

Born in Baltimore, MD, in 1947, the only child of Frank and Eleanor Laber, Frank is well known and respected in the Baltimore/Washington area where he has spent his entire life. He began playing golf as a youngster and was a fixture 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 Chair of the MAPGA Membership Committee in 1984-85, and Chair of the MAPGA Employment Committee from 1986 - 1995. Frank served as President of the Northern Chapter in 1989-90; and following that term, he served as Vice President of the Northern Chapter in 1991-93. He served as Northern Chapter Director-at-Large from 1994 - 2001. For his years of dedicated service to his fellow professionals and to the Section, Frank was awarded the prestigious MAPGA President's Award in 2001. Frank has also been active on a national level, serving on the PGA Education Committee in 1984-85, and from 1986-91 as a member of the PGA Employment Committee. One of Frank's proudest career accomplishments was 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 where people of all ages and playing ability could learn, practice, and enjoy the game of golf. Frank accepted that challenge also, and realized his dream in 1999. Following 18 years as the Head PGA 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 22 years to his wife, Susan, who says Frank is her favorite "All World" PGA Master Professional. For his unrelenting dedication and countless contributions to the golf profession and to PGA professionals, the MAPGA is proud to recognize Master Professional Frank Laber as one of

its most respected members and this year's recipient of the MAPGA Golf Professional of the Year Award.