

2013 Professional of the Year
Richard Cromwell, PGA
Executive Director of Golf at the Country Club of Virginia

Richard Cromwell was born to Guy and June Cromwell in Tallahassee, Florida on December 11, 1959. The majority of Richard's childhood was spent on Florida's Treasure Coast in the town of Stuart. The only boy amongst his siblings, Richard spent much of his adolescence playing baseball and was introduced to the game of golf briefly at the age of 10. Following that introduction, golf would become a constant in Richard's life from the age of 14.

Richard's parents bought him a set of Sam Snead junior golf clubs at the age of 10 and also purchased him a Junior Membership at the local golf course to help get him started in golf. "They thought the clubs and membership would distract me from playing football since my mother was worried about me getting hurt," said Richard on his parent's intentions. They were right about golf, but not so right about getting hurt.

In ninth grade, Richard was playing on the baseball team as the shortstop. During a game, Richard and the team's left fielder went for a "Texas League" pop fly at the same time and collided, leaving Richard with a broken jaw in three places. While his jaw was wired shut for several weeks, Richard turned to golf; the only sport he could really play in his recovery. From that point, Richard ended his baseball career and welcomed his future in golf.

Growing up in Stuart, Florida, Richard was surrounded by many golf courses and outstanding junior golfers. It was easy for him to find good players to play with and his competitive nature drove him to improve. As Richard continued to develop as a player, he benefitted greatly from the coaching and friendship of the late Dr. Embry Abell, a dentist and accomplished player from Fort Pierce, Florida, who also helped many other top amateur and professional players.

At the age of 16, Richard started his first golf job at the Martin County Golf Course. He spent almost every day there, after school and in the summer, helping then PGA Professional Tom Pollard in the golf shop and on the driving range. His commitment to golf through these high school years paid off for Richard when he accepted a scholarship to play on the golf team at Texas A&M University.

Richard's time on the golf team at A&M jump started his successful playing career. With instruction from the late golf teaching legend Dick Harmon, PGA, Richard achieved All-American status at A&M during the 1977-78 and 1979-80 school years. In 1981, Richard graduated from A&M with a Bachelor's degree in Finance. That same year, he would marry his high school sweetheart, Melissa and enter the PGA Tour Qualifying School.

The journeyman life of golf professionals is a daunting one and requires many hours of commitment and patience. Fortunately for Richard, Melissa was with him every step of the way. Starting in 1984, the duo traveled to Asia where Richard played for two seasons on the Asian Golf Circuit. They also traveled to Europe when Richard qualified for the PGA European Tour where he competed in events in both 1985 and 1986. He continued to pursue the PGA Tour and eventually earned his tour card at Q-school in 1987. As a result, in 1988, Richard played in 28 events on the PGA Tour. After that year, Richard would only return to the PGA Tour once to play in the Michelob Championship at Kingsmill in 2000.

The road to establishing himself as a PGA Club Professional began in 1991 when Richard was hired to work at the former TPC at The Woodlands in The Woodlands, Texas. In the course of his four years at the TPC, Richard earned his PGA Class A status and also achieved the honor of Assistant Golf Professional of the Year as well as Player of the Year for the Southern Texas PGA Section (1994). He immediately immersed himself in Section activities by joining both the Section Membership and Tournament Committees.

In February of 1995, Richard accepted a Golf Professional position at River Oaks Country Club in Houston, Texas, but that would only last until August of 1995 when The Woodlands Country Club called on Richard to be their Head Golf Professional. Richard worked two seasons as Head Golf Professional of The Woodlands Country Club's Palmer Course and one season as Head Golf Professional at The Woodlands Country Club's North and West Courses. Now a family of four, Richard, Melissa, Christina, and Ryan, headed for the Middle Atlantic Section in the colonial area of Williamsburg, Virginia. Kingsmill Resort sought the talents of Richard and he became their Group Director of Golf and Club Operations in May of 1998. Then in April of 2001, the prestigious Country Club of Virginia hired Richard to be their Executive Director of Golf.

Richard's time at The Country Club of Virginia has enabled him to enhance his career both as a Golf Professional and as a Business Executive since he is responsible for the Golf Professional and Golf Course Maintenance departments at the Club. In 2007, he became a Board member with the Virginia Chapter of the Club Manager's Association of America (CMAA). He served as a Board officer and is the current President of the Chapter. In addition to the CMAA, Richard has served on the Virginia Golf Council as a Board member since 2007 and filled the duty of Executive Secretary from 2009-2010. He also held a seat on the Board of Directors for the Virginia National Golf Course Owners' Association and was the Secretary/Treasurer from 2009-2010. To further his education, Richard became a Certified Club Manager (CCM) with the CMAA and is also a Certified PGA Professional in the areas of General Management and Golf Operations.

Throughout his life, Richard has demonstrated a passion for playing and teaching the game and for leading a quality driven organization. "Take pride in your performance," he states, "and be on a relentless mission to improve and learn every day." Richard recognizes that success is not achieved on your own. He has surrounded himself with strong team members and recognizes that it takes the coordinated efforts of many to accomplish any significant goals.

The Cromwell family resides in Midlothian, Virginia. Melissa formerly worked in Human Resources and is now an active volunteer in the local community. Ryan (14) is a freshman at James River High School and enjoys playing both basketball and tennis. Christina (19) is a sophomore at Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pennsylvania where she is studying Exercise and Sports Science. She played on the women's basketball team as a freshman and is currently a member of the Ursinus Women's Tennis team.