

James A. Fitzgerald, PGA

Chevy Chase Club

Chevy Chase, Maryland

Service to the MAPGA Employment Committee, mentoring of his assistants to become Head Professionals, and support of local charities and his community are characteristics of Jim Fitzgerald, PGA. These, along with his commitment to being a better professional and helping others see and fulfill their potential, are the qualities that have earned him his first Bill Strausbaugh Award.

Jim was born August 30, 1956 on Long Island, New York to Arthur and Edith Fitzgerald. Jim grew up in a large Catholic family with six sisters: Patricia, Kathy, Irene, Sharon, Mary, and Karen. In 1965, Jim's father, an engineer, was hired by IBM and the family moved to Maryland. At age 11, Jim caddied for his father Saturday mornings at Falls Road Golf Course in Potomac, Maryland, and began playing golf regularly when he was thirteen years old at the Potomac Valley Country Club (now Poolesville Golf Club) in Poolesville, Maryland.

Jim graduated from Gaithersburg High School in 1974, where he played on the golf team. Jim lettered in golf at the University of Maryland for three years and graduated in 1978. Prior to graduating, Jim worked summers in the Lakewood Country Club bag room for PGA Professionals Dick Wilson and Jerry Hogge. While working, Jim continued to compete, winning the Bubby Worsham Championship in 1976 and qualifying for the 1973 & 1974 US Junior Amateur Championships and the 1977 US Amateur Championship. Jim turned professional in 1978 after graduating from the University of Maryland.

From 1978-1979, Jim worked as an assistant golf professional at Montgomery Village Golf Club in Gaithersburg, Maryland. He moved on in 1980, to Columbia Country Club, as the teaching and playing professional. It was there that Jim had the privilege of working for the esteemed "Coach" Bill Strausbaugh. He was elected to PGA membership in April of 1982 and in that same year, accepted the head golf coach position at George Washington University. He coached for two years and also worked as the PGA Teaching Professional at Sandy Lane Golf Club, a five-star resort, in Barbados, West Indies in the winter seasons from 1982-1987. During this time, Jim accepted a position as head PGA Professional at Sankaty Head Golf Club in Nantucket, Mass, where he served for three seasons, 1985 to 1987. In 1987, Jim was selected to his current position as the head PGA Head Professional at Chevy Chase Club.

Jim's service to his facilities and to his Section has been recognized by his peers. While working under Coach Strausbaugh, he was honored as the Middle Atlantic Section's Assistant PGA Professional of the Year in 1981. Later, in 1996, he was selected as the MAPGA's Teacher of the Year. In 2004, he won Merchandiser of the Year (Private Category) and in 2011 Jim earned the Section's highest active recognition of Professional of the Year. This award (Professional of the Year) bestows special recognition on a PGA member whose total contributions to the game best exemplify the complete and consummate PGA Professional.

Jim's desire to become a PGA Professional was not influenced by any one individual. He enjoyed the game as a youngster and was self-motivated to be proficient in all areas of expertise required of golf professionals. He is grateful to have had the opportunity, early in his career, to be guided by the professional he most admired and looked up to, Bill Strausbaugh, a great man, and role model.

Jim feels fortunate to be able to spend his career doing something he enjoys so much. Jim cares deeply about the golf profession, his role as a PGA Professional, his staff, and his membership as is evident through his mentoring of 17 Assistants who have moved on to take Head Professional positions. He tries to be consistent every day and treat everyone the same. Jim continually strives to improve personally and professionally and adapt to the times.

Jim and his wife Jane have been married for 29 years. Jim and Jane met at Columbia Country Club when Jim became her instructor in 1983. Jane has enjoyed an outstanding amateur career, a highlight being advancing to the finals of the USGA Women's Senior Championship in 2012. Jim and Jane have two adult children, Kelly and James.