

Mark Helffrich, PGA
The Suburban Club, Pikesville, Maryland

Mark was born on December 26, 1955 at Clovis Air Force Base, New Mexico to Henrietta and Alan Helffrich. He has three brothers, Michael, Peter, and Boone. At the time of his birth, his father was a jet pilot (F-86 fighter) in the Air Force. He then went to work for Armco Steel International and moved the family overseas in 1957, where they lived in Columbia, Brazil, Jamaica and Spain. Mark did not return to the U.S. until he went to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1974, where he played golf and earned his B.A. in Economics with Minors in History and Languages (he speaks Spanish and Portuguese fluently, and can hold his own in French and Italian).

Mark's father introduced him to golf at the Club De Golf Los Lagartos in Bogota, Columbia when he was 4 years old. He learned by watching his father take lessons and hit balls. His teachers were Mario Gonzales of Brazil and Miquel Sala of Columbia – both were dominant players in South America.

Mark considers himself fortunate to have traveled and played tournament golf at a very early age. The exciting combination of travel and competition hooked him on the game. He turned professional in 1979 as an assistant to Max Elbin, Head PGA Professional at Burning Tree Club, then to Chevy Chase Club working for Head PGA Professionals Ward Burgess (7 years) and Jim Fitzgerald (1 year). Mark was elected to membership in The PGA in 1986 and was selected to be the Head PGA Professional at The Suburban Club of Baltimore County in 1989.

Mark has previously served the MAPGA as Tournament Chair, Northern Chapter Vice President, and recently completed his two-year term as the President of the Northern Chapter and Chair of the Section's Long Range Planning Committee. Having been on the Chapter and/or Section Board of Directors since 1990, he has served on many other committees as well. In addition, he established the Northern Chapter Mentoring Committee while he was President; assisted at various employment and other educational "cracker barrels;" assisted many fellow PGA professionals with resume writing, interviewing techniques, negotiating contracts, merchandising, club fitting and teaching, along with freely sharing his business acumen. He encouraged and helped finance continuing education for assistants, and encouraged participation in APA and Section tournament programs. Seven assistant professionals under his mentorship became head professionals. Many fellow professionals have become involved in Section and Chapter activities due to his outstanding leadership. Mark also hosted the most recent Northern Chapter Pro-Junior.

Mark is sincere and fair in his dealings with all people. His fellow professionals and the members of his club respect him as a leader and as a PGA Professional. He always places the betterment of his organization ahead of any personal agenda. His work ethic is strong and positive. Mark has donated countless time, expertise and merchandise to many charitable associations including: Golfers Charitable, Rally for the Cure, Red Cross, Police and Fire Association, Muscular Dystrophy, schools and others. From 1980-2002 Mark volunteered at various Junior Clinics throughout the Middle Atlantic Section. From 1980-1985 he taught and promoted the game to juniors, adults, and seniors in Brazil, Columbia, Argentina, Paraguay, and Panama. In 1990, he organized and ran a clinic for over 150 kids from the Baltimore inner city.

Mark established a successful Golf Awareness Program at his club to make golfers more aware of the etiquette, traditions of the game, and how to better care for the course. He has written many articles for his club bulletin promoting the great traditions of golf and how it is a game of honor. Mark has made several radio presentations giving golf tips - always promoting the PGA Professional. On his radio

appearances, he specifically talked about the relationship between club fitting and teaching and how the PGA Professional is uniquely qualified to fit clubs. He also spoke eloquently about The PGA and Junior Golf.

Mark has made presentations at several high schools, teaching what it means to be a PGA Professional and what the requirements are to become a PGA member. He created a Junior Golfer Playing Privileges Test at his club, which emphasizes etiquette, traditions, safety and proper care of the course. Juniors must attend clinics and pass the test to earn playing privileges. He constantly encourages all players to follow the USGA Rules of Golf. Mark promotes golf by emphasizing that the game can satisfy many needs - competition, social, family bonding, business entertainment, vacation, etc.

Interestingly, Mark's grandfathers both left notable marks in history. His grandfather, Alan B. Helffrich, ran the anchor leg for the United States' 1600-meter relay team in the 1924 Olympics in Paris, France. He won a gold medal on the way to setting a world record. He held 11 world records in track. Mark's maternal grandfather, Harold Alderfer, was the head of the Political Science Department at Penn State University. The King of Greece decorated him in 1950 for his extraordinary success in setting up local and municipal governments in Greece.

Mark and his wife Chris were married in October of 1984 in Bethesda, MD. They have two sons, Justin Boone (14) and Skyler Austin (11). The other members of their family include their German Shepard Mack and cats - Sapphire, Twister and Spunky.