

***James “Lefty” Barba, PGA***  
*Eagle Haven Golf Course, Norfolk, Virginia*

Lefty, nicknamed as an eight-year-old left-handed pitcher with a reputation of being able to throw the ball through a brick wall or to curve it around the wall, grew up in a Marine Corps family. His father, Colonel William H. Barba, a 28-year Marine Corps veteran, fought in China, Guadalcanal, New Britain, and Korea. After retirement from the Marine Corps, Colonel Barba taught mathematics at Cox High School in Virginia Beach, Virginia for 16 years. He was an avid golfer and a member of the Eagle Haven Men's Golf Association on Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek. Lefty's two brothers, William and Richard, served two tours each in Vietnam and also retired as Marine Corps Colonels. Lefty also has six sisters, Valerie, Susan, Kathy, Pamela, Deborah, and Marie, scattered from the mountains of Virginia and North Carolina all the way to Seattle.

Lefty began playing golf when he was eight years old after his dad registered him for his first lesson with Eagle Haven's Head PGA Professional, Tommy Whillock. Tommy's nephew, future PGA Professional Andy Giles, worked as Tommy's assistant and also helped with the juniors. Eagle Haven provided a wonderful opportunity to learn the game of golf. Lefty and his friends could ride there on their bikes and often spent the whole day at the course.

During his sophomore year in high school, Lefty began working for Tommy picking up range balls and watering the course at night. He played two years of junior golf during high school. After his sophomore year, he worked full-time in the golf business. Lefty graduated in 1974 from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia with a Bachelors degree in Human Resource Management. Along the way, he also took agronomy courses at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia and culinary courses at the Air Force Culinary Management School at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas.

In 1972, Lefty began working as Eagle Haven's shop assistant then became their Assistant Superintendent followed by Superintendent. In 1976, he began a six-year tenure as the Assistant Golf Course Manager before accepting the Golf Course Manager position. Lefty was elected to PGA membership in 1984 and has been the Head PGA Professional at Eagle Haven ever since then. He was presented the Navy's Meritorious Civilian Service Award in 1996, in recognition of service which has been of high value and benefit to the United States Navy. Lefty was recently honored as a “Friend of the Danish Community” for his work with NATO forces for making their stay in the United States much more pleasant.

Lefty likes working with people and believes helping others learn and enjoy golf, an activity that has brought so much to his life, is the greatest achievement a PGA Professional can attain. He tries to give the course's sailors, marines, and soldiers the biggest bang for their buck by carefully buying closeouts, samples, and quantities that offer the best discounts. Lefty wants these young service personnel, who put their lives on the line so that we may enjoy the freedoms we often take for granted, to have a quality golf experience in what little time they have available for recreation and relaxation. He tries to provide his customers with the same quality of merchandise that they would find in the finest off-base retail operation at a price that reflects their level of discretionary income.

Lefty and his wife of 35 years, Donna, met in 1967 as sophomores at Bayside High School in Virginia Beach. They have two sons, Jason and Nathan, who both played junior golf. Jason won a scholarship to Radford University in Radford, Virginia where he played college golf for two years before graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Nathan was a gifted junior golfer who won the Virginia state championship in his age group and played successful high school golf. Both sons still play and they get together with Lefty for a round whenever they can.