

## MAPGA PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

*This high honor bestows special recognition on a PGA Professional for overall performance as a PGA Professional, leadership, service, and promotion of the game of golf.*

### **James A. Fitzgerald, PGA**

*Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, Maryland*

Jim was born August 30, 1956 on Long Island, New York to Arthur (now deceased) and Edith Fitzgerald. Growing up in a large Catholic family, Jim had six sisters: Patricia Franck, Kathy Larue, Irene Hitchcock, Sharon Maiewski, Mary Spurlock (now deceased), and Karen Kordon. Jim caddied for his father at Falls Road Golf Course in Potomac, Maryland beginning at age eleven and began playing golf when he was thirteen years old at Potomac Valley Country Club (now Poolesville Golf Club) in Poolesville, Maryland.

Jim graduated from Gaithersburg Maryland High School in 1974. From 1974-1977, he worked in the bagroom for PGA Professionals Dick Wilson and Jerry Hogge at Lakewood Country Club in Rockville, Maryland. Jim won the 1976 Bubby Worsham Championship, qualified for the 1977 US Amateur, and finished fourth in the 1977 Middle Atlantic Amateur. He turned professional in 1978 after graduating from the University of Maryland.

From 1978-1979, Jim worked at Montgomery Village Golf Club in Gaithersburg. He moved to Columbia Country Club in 1980, where he worked for "Coach" Bill Strausbaugh. Jim was elected to PGA membership in April of 1982. From 1982-1984, Jim coached the George Washington University golf team. He was the PGA Teaching Professional at Sandy Lane Golf Club, a five-star resort, in Barbados, West Indies in the winter season from 1982-1987. Jim became the head PGA Professional at Sankaty Head Golf Club on Nantucket Island in 1985.

In 1987, Jim was selected as the head PGA Professional at Chevy Chase Club. In 1981, Jim was honored as the Middle Atlantic Section's Assistant PGA Professional of the Year and recognized as the MAPGA's Teacher of the Year in 1996. In 2004, he was selected as the Merchandiser of the Year Private Category. 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 feels fortunate he has been able to make a living and achieve a modest degree of success doing something he enjoys so well. In Jim's early years in golf he was exposed to professionals he feels were not the best of role models. Later on, working for Bill Strausbaugh at Columbia Country Club, a great role model, he was guided by someone he wanted to emulate.

Jim cares deeply about the golf profession, his image as a PGA Professional, his staff, and his membership. He tries to be consistent every day and treat everyone the same. In areas where he or his operation are not strong, Jim tries to improve and constantly adapt to the times.

Jim married Jane Abood on May 11, 1985. She is an outstanding amateur golfer – they met when he gave her golf lessons in 1983. Jane won the Maryland State Golf Association's Women's Amateur Championship five times and the Women's Open once, in 2001. She has qualified for every USGA Championship for which she is eligible. Jim and Jane have two children, daughter Kelly (23) and son James (19). Kelly is a graduate of Lehigh University where she played on the Lehigh golf team in 2006-2007. James is currently an Engineering student at the University of Michigan.