

## ***MERCHANDISERS OF THE YEAR***

*This award is bestowed on those PGA Professionals who have demonstrated superior skills as merchandisers in the promotion of golf. This award recognizes excellence in golf shop operations in three categories: Private, Resort, and Public/Military/Semi-Private.*

### ***MERCHANDISER OF THE YEAR***

#### ***PRIVATE CATEGORY***

***James Schouller, PGA***

*Fountain Head Country Club*

*Hagerstown, Maryland*

For his dedication and success at Fountain Head Country Club's pro shop, Jim Schouller has been awarded the 2017 MAPGA Private Merchandiser of the Year Award for the second time. His attention to detail and intricate display designs have increased annual sales and greatly impressed members. From hand-stamped ball markers to using available golf course wood and materials, Schouller's creative approach to selling golf merchandise shines throughout Fountain Head's pro shop.

Jim Schouller was born on January 13, 1974 in Clarksburg, Mass. Jim's father, PGA Life Member James Schouller Sr., introduced him to golf in Stamford, N.Y. as soon as he could walk. Under his father's supervision, Jim began working at Stamford Golf Club answering phones, cleaning clubs and washing golf carts before the age of 12. During high school in Massachusetts, he became a more competitive golfer and was voted All-State and All-New England and soon left to attend PGM school at New Mexico State University in 1996.

Jim's first position after college was at Colonie Country Club in New York before arriving as an assistant at Congressional Country Club in 1999. After eight years at Congressional, he became the Head Professional at Fountain Head in 2007, where he received the 2012 MAPGA Private Merchandiser of the Year Award. The Fountain Head Pro Shop has been designated a Platinum Golf Shop by the Association of Golf Merchandisers for four consecutive years. In 2010, it was recognized as a Golf Digest Top 100 Golf Shop and featured as a Best Practice of the Year for PGA Magazine in 2014 and 2015.

This year, Jim's best performing hard-goods promotion was the overhaul of the footwear in Fountain Head's golf shop. Using a reclaimed tree stump from the property, he designed the "shoe tree," an intricate and eye-catching shoe display. The nature-inspired piece benefitted shoe sales by placing them front and center in the shop on a conversation piece. The results were significant with a footwear sale increase of 40 percent and special orders increasing by 13 percent.

Jim continued following Fountain Head's tradition of staying close to nature with his custom ball marker display. Once again, using wood from the golf course, with a piece of local railroad rail and a Fountain Head Country Club steel stamp, Jim began hand stamping custom ball markers for members. The activity of the member being able to stamp their own ball marker creates interest in the product and a conversation piece within the pro shop. By eliminating costs and creating the product themselves, Fountain Head increased its gross margin 81 percent. The small stamping station has made a tremendous impact in sales per square foot for the pro shop.

In 2016, Jim dedicated 25 percent of Fountain Head's shop to a new project, the Unique Boutique. Aimed at Fountain Head's female members, the new addition doubled the number of vendors, reduced inventory and increased sales while adding an attractive element to the pro shop.

After such a successful 2016 season, Jim is looking to maintain the growth of Fountain Head's pro shop and continue developing new display and marketing techniques.

Jim and his wife Emily were married in 2000 and have two children; James III, born in 2007 and Fenway, born in 2008.