

MERCHANDISER OF THE YEAR

These awards bestow special recognition on those PGA members who have demonstrated superior skills as merchandisers in the promotion of golf. This award is given for excellence in golf shop operations in three categories: Private, Resort, and Public/Municipal/Military/Semi-Private.

Private Category

ROBERT H. MCNAMARA, PGA - Farmington Country Club

"It is not what you do, but how you do it." This is Rob McNamara's motto, and his successful career and merchandising skills indicate that he represents the golf profession very well. Born in Danville, KY in 1965, to Samuel and Marsha McNamara, Rob inherited a legacy in golf from his father and his grandfather before him. Rob's dad was a seven-time Club Champion and his grandfather was a PGA Professional from 1930 to 1948, serving as President of the Kentucky Section PGA during his career. Rob began playing golf with his father and grandfather when he was only five years old. He has always enjoyed competition and success. Rob was a three-time NCAA All-American, and a four-time All Southeastern Conference winner. In 1985, he captured the Kentucky Amateur Championship and was a two-time winner of the Southern Amateur in 1986 and 1987. Rob declared his professional status in 1988. He worked as an Assistant at the University of Florida in 1992 and 1993. In late 1993, Rob moved to Kapalua Resort in Maui, Hawaii where he worked as an Assistant for the winter season. In 1994, he accepted an Assistant's position at Farmington CC and in 1997 was offered the position of Head Golf Professional at Farmington. Rob was elected for PGA membership in September, 1994. In addition to his excellent merchandising skills, Rob is an accomplished player, serves on the MAPGA Board of Directors as Section Tournament Chair, and in 2000 he was ranked #1 Teacher in Virginia by *Golf Digest*.

Service is the key to Rob's merchandising success. How he delivers that service is the foundation for his merchandise philosophy, with his goal to be able to answer "yes" on each of the following three questions: 1). Was the staff friendly and pleasant? 2). Were all promises delivered? and 3). Was there value for the purchase? Rob believes that if the answer to each of these questions is yes, then the customer will continue to choose his golf shop.

Another important key for Rob's merchandising operation is the ability to "buy" properly. While many may focus on selling as the most important point of merchandise, Rob feels that price can always be lowered to sell an item, but it is more important to buy correctly for your market so you do not have to take as many markdowns. He and his staff spend a great deal of time working through the order taking process. His maxim is *"you can't sell it right, if you don't buy it right."* Rob is convinced that focusing as much time as possible in this area brings positive results. Because Farmington CC is a private facility, Rob's market allows the opportunity to focus on selling "high end" goods in his shop. In 1998, Rob made the decision to reduce the number of vendors he utilizes, and establishing a "partnership" with the ones he does utilize. He now carries a limited number of vendors and makes a very deep commitment to those companies. This partner relationship has proven very helpful in attaining higher profit margins as well as improved service from his vendors. Those improved vendor relationships are eventually passed along to Rob's customers.

Rob and his staff strive to create an atmosphere that is pleasant and one that promotes people spending time enjoying the shop. Whether someone buys goods is completely secondary in their approach with the members and guests. For example, he utilizes a sizable amount of props and golf memorabilia to create a shop that encourages people to look around. His experience has proven that if customers spend more time in the shop, they are more likely to make a purchase.

Rob views his sale of hard goods as a service element only. Golf equipment sales make up only 40% of his

total sales, obviously producing a lower profit margin, so he uses this as a relationship building tool. All of the golf equipment purchased from his shop comes with a complimentary club fitting. By delivering competitive prices as well as trained professional service, he is able to get repeat customers for higher profit items such as men's and ladies' apparel.

Quoting Rob on his view that merchandising can be a positive reflection of a club's entire golf operation, *"I am hopeful that we are using our golf shop as a way to present Farmington Country Club in the highest possible image. As we continue to keep the service element the focus, I believe we can reach our goals of being a great golf shop."*

Rob is also a devoted husband and father. Although he has a very hectic schedule, he cherishes the time he spends with his wife of eight years, Carrie, and their two beautiful children, five-year old Madeline and two-year old Sam.