

Rob McNamara- Professional of the Year

Rob McNamara, PGA, has quietly and consistently succeeded at Farmington Country Club for 24 years. With his own unique style and personality, he is a master at his craft. Whether it is providing magnificent service to his members and their guests, outstanding counsel to his staff, increasing the number of rounds played by every demographic, generating more sales in his golf shop through exceptional service (and merchandising), annually teaching a tremendous number of golf lessons, or simply playing a fun round of golf with his members, Rob is the PGA Professional who simply “makes it all happen at Farmington.”

Like many golf professionals, his interest in golf started with playing. Rob had a successful junior, high school, college, and amateur playing career, including back to back Southern Amateur titles in 1986 and 1987, plus, a Kentucky State Amateur and State Open title in 1985 and 1986, respectively. He capped off his amateur career with a win representing the United States in the Simon Boliver Cup in Caracas, Venezuela. He and partner David Toms defeated 25 countries. The second place team was 13 shots behind David and Rob. In January of 1988, while still in college to finish his business degree at Louisiana State University, Rob returned back to Venezuela to turn professional. He toured the country giving eight golf clinics and exhibitions. Amazingly, Rob doesn't speak Spanish! While on tour in Venezuela, Rob captured his first event as a pro by winning the Barquisimeto Open by 9 shots. Over the course of the next four years, Rob would play on the Canadian Tour, the Australian Tour, and various USA mini-tours. One of his highlights was playing in the 1990 United States Open at Medinah. It served as an encore performance as he had qualified as a 17 year old high school senior in the summer of 1983 when the tournament was held at Oakmont. At the time Rob qualified, he was the second youngest participant ever other than Jack Nicklaus. Rob had dreams of the PGA Tour. Unfortunately, or fortunately, a few too many missed putts and cuts led Rob to the other side of the golf business, the life as a PGA club professional.

He was elected to membership in The PGA of America in 1994 and has served as the Head PGA Professional at Farmington Country Club since the summer of 1997. Rob's focus as a PGA Professional has been to excel in all areas of responsibility entrusted to him. He believes in “wearing all the hats” of the PGA Golf Professional.

As a PGA club professional Rob was able to continue his playing success by winning many professional tournaments at the Pro-Am, Chapter, and Section level including the 1994 MAPGA Assistant Professional Championship, 1997 MAPGA Section Professional Championship, 1995 State Open of Virginia, 2004 Holden Cup, and four Southern Chapter Championships. However, his attention quickly expanded to teaching golf. Like many that have had the good fortune of playing well, Rob found

pleasure in teaching. He was recognized by his peers as an outstanding instructor when he was named the #1 teacher in Virginia by Golf Digest magazine in 2000.

Rob has demonstrated his commitment to the MAPGA Section and The PGA of America in many ways including as a player, an administrator, a volunteer, and a mentor. He has been a strong supporter of the tournament program by playing an active schedule for many years, as well as service as Tournament Chair. Not only was Rob a tournament participant, but he also made sure Farmington gave back to the association and the supporting amateur bodies. Farmington routinely opens its doors for educational and playing opportunities for PGA Professionals and amateur golfers alike. The club has always seen the importance “giving back” by playing host whenever possible. During Rob’s reign as the Head Professional, the club has hosted a VSGA Women’s State Amateur, a VSGA Senior State Amateur, a VSGA State Amateur, and Middle Atlantic Senior Amateur, and several MAPGA events such as the Head Pro Championship, the Pro-Scratch, the Tournament of Champions, and State Open Qualifier. Most recently, Farmington stepped up at the last minute when the scheduled changed to host the 2017 MAPGA Section Championship. Also in 2017, the club hosted the US Open Local qualifier and has agreed to do it again in 2018. The club hosted four PGA and VSGA seminars this winter alone including, a USGA Handicap seminar, PGA Player development seminar, MAPGA Town Hall Meetings, and VSGA/USGA Tournament software seminars. Farmington also hosted the PGA District 10 Conference a number of years ago in treating the officers and Executive Directors of the Kentucky, Carolinas and Middle Atlantic Sections to the three-day event. Without Rob McNamara at Farmington, none of these events would have happened.

Because of Rob’s experience and background in merchandising and golf operations, Rob has been asked to teach his fellow PGA professionals. He has given several merchandising seminars in efforts to help PGA professionals earn a better living. Most recently, Rob led the 2016 and 2017 Employment Summit discussions on “How to Enhance Your Current Job” at Columbia Country Club. Those that attended said it was one of the most helpful and entertaining programs they have ever attended. Rob has agreed to return again this November. He is always happy to sit with a younger professional and offer them advice on their career and golf game.

Rob inspires his fellow golf professionals the same way he inspires all of his relationships. He is extremely optimistic and enthusiastic with everything he does. His zest for life is infectious. Rob uses that energy and his experiences to teach those around him. He admits he has made mistakes. But, those mistakes are what Rob uses to guide his success as a PGA Professional. He is honest and candid with his fellow PGA professionals. He is ever present and available to mentor young aspiring golfers, both amateur and professional who seek his counsel and friendship. Rob sometimes feels that the shortcomings he faced while pursuing the PGA Tour, were simply hidden blessings for providing guidance to the pitfalls of life and targeting his

direction for success. Due to the large size of the golf staff at Farmington, Rob has had the opportunity to share his attitude about life with many fellow PGA professionals and apprentices. There have been 30 different PGA assistant professionals and almost 20 PGM students who have worked under Rob's direction. Nine of those took advantage of the "training, guidance and mentoring" he provided and became successful PGA Head Professionals. Rob loves to motivate people to think of what they can eventually be and not necessarily what they currently are.

For five of the last six years, Rob has made the trek to Fort Belvoir, Virginia and taught at the Links to Freedom Golf Program. The manner in which he relates to and teaches the participants is truly something to behold and admire. His humorous and skillful "show" at the end of the program always delights the wounded participants and their family members immensely! Rob always follows up these visits with donations of clubs. Further, he has donated his stipend check back to the program for use in purchasing additional clubs and equipment for the program. Rob's infectious energy for golf along with his deep respect and admiration for our country's service personnel comes through loud and clear at these clinics. The participants absolutely love to learn from him.

This is the third award that Rob has won in the Middle Atlantic Section; the first two being the 2001 and 2008 Merchandiser of the Year Private Category Award. He has been married to Carrie McNamara for 24 years. Carrie has been an unbelievable supporter of Rob. You couldn't ask for a person to have been more accommodating to the workload demands of a PGA Golf Professional. Together they have two children, Madeline (21) and Sam (18).