

**Marilyn (M. J.) Smith, PGA**  
*Army Navy Country Club, Arlington, Virginia*

As Director of Instruction at Army Navy Country Club, Marilyn, better known as “M.J.,” Smith oversees all teaching programs offered at the Arlington and Fairfax, VA facilities. She provides opportunities for golfers of all levels to enjoy clinics, golf schools and individual lessons. Nationally she has conducted clinics for corporate outings and assisted with pro-am clinics. Internationally, she has conducted numerous clinics in Australia and New Zealand.

Born in Lower Hutt, New Zealand in 1952, M.J.’s parents, Jenny and Tony (deceased) Smith introduced her to the game of golf when she was eleven years old. Her father was the Professional/Secretary/Manager of the Shandon Golf Club in Petone, New Zealand and M.J. spent many hours at the club and attending golf clinics. Probably the most influential person in her life as far as learning to play golf, other than her parents, was her namesake – LPGA Founder Marilynn Smith. M.J.’s parents took her to a local club to watch an exhibition by Marilynn Smith and when M.J. had Ms. Smith sign her autograph book, the older Ms. Smith, noticing that she was signing for a “namesake” took special interest in M.J. When M.J. was 16 (and already quite a good player) Marilynn Smith returned to New Zealand to conduct a clinic and invited M.J. to participate as a demonstrator.

Before becoming a golf professional, M.J. had numerous amateur accomplishments. Among them: New Zealand Junior Champion 1968, 1970, 1972; New Zealand Woman Golfer of the Year 1971, 1972; New Zealand Stroke Play Champion 1972; New Zealand Under 21 Representative 1966-1970; New Zealand Commonwealth Team Member 1971; and New Zealand Tasman Cup and World Cup Team Member 1972. In 1973 she declared her professional status and played the Australian Tour from 1973 through 1974, then she became the first New Zealand woman to play the LPGA Tour from 1974 to 1989. M.J. was the Australian LPGA Champion in 1974, and the Japanese Ladies Masters Champion in 1975. In 1987, she was named the New Zealand Sporting and Cultural Ambassador.

In 1990, M.J. took a position as Assistant Professional at Robin Dale Country Club, and in 1991 she went to Army Navy Country Club as an Assistant. Shortly thereafter, she was named the Director of Instruction at Army Navy. She was elected to PGA membership in 1995. Since coming to the Middle Atlantic Section, M.J. has been named the MAPGA Woman Player of the Year four times, in ‘95, ‘96, ‘99 and 2000. In 2002, she won the LPGA Teaching Club Pro Senior National and Southeast Section Championships.

M.J. has a passion for sharing her knowledge and teaching others the many rewards of playing golf. At Army Navy CC she was responsible for the formation of the Career Women’s Golf Group, which currently has over 80 members. She was also instrumental in setting in motion the Career Women’s Golf Organization Interclub, which has 14 participating clubs from Virginia and Maryland. From 1983 – 1990, M.J. wrote monthly articles for the *New Zealand Golf Magazine*, and from 1988 – 1990 she wrote monthly golf tips for the same magazine. More recently, M.J. has made several appearances on behalf of the MAPGA on *Capitol Golf Weekly* shown on News Channel 8, and she was selected by *Golf for Women* as one of the Top 50 Teachers of 2002.

In addition to her impressive record of playing accomplishments and very successful teaching programs, M.J. has devoted a great deal of time and energy to community service. She helped to raise over \$3000 for the Heart Association in the early 1990’s by playing a golf marathon at Robin Dale CC. This past year, following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack on the Pentagon, she organized all of the golf professionals at Army Navy CC to donate lessons over a three-day period. The proceeds went to an education fund for the family of LCDR David L. Williams, USN, a member at Army Navy CC who was killed in the attack.

M.J. attributes her success as a teacher to teaching at the pace of the student. *“We all learn at a different speed and I make sure the people I am teaching have fun, and understand what they are trying to achieve. I teach a variety of individuals and feel it is important to adapt to their abilities while keeping my personal picture of the golf swing in mind.”* The MAPGA salutes M. J. Smith on her many accomplishments and on being selected by her peers as the MAPGA Teacher of the Year!