

### ***Earle Hellen Sports Media Award***

This award bestows special recognition on an outstanding member of the media who best exemplifies a commitment and service to golf and sport reporting and who demonstrates the same genuine appreciation for the role of the PGA Professional as was demonstrated by the late Earle Hellen (formerly of the Newport News Newspapers).

#### ***Capital Golf Gang***

Steve Czaban, Ron Thomas, and John Ronis, PGA

The Capital Golf Gang is a weekly golf radio show airing on ESPN radio in Washington, DC. These three personalities, joined by Executive Director Jon Guhl, talk local and national golf, promoting PGA professionals and events. They spend their air time talking golf, grumbling about slow play, and solving the world's issues.

#### **Steve Czaban**

Steve Czaban is one of the most experienced daily sports talk radio hosts in the nation. In his 26 year professional career, Steve has worked for every major syndicated sports talk network (Sporting News, ESPN Radio, Fox Sports Radio, Yahoo Sports Radio, SB Nation Radio), filled in as a guest host for popular national personality Jim Rome, and has worked locally in markets including Santa Barbara, Chicago, Milwaukee, Charlotte and Washington D.C.

Steve (or "Czabe" as his friends and listeners have always called him) is a native of Fairfax County, Virginia. He was born on June 1, 1968 and grew up on what he jokingly calls the "mean streets of McLean". His father is a retired federal worker, his mother a retired teacher. He has one older brother Jim, who is a DC based food and drug law attorney. And one younger sister, Ann Marie, who works in publications for the DC based "Newseum."

Czabe was co-host with longtime DC radio veteran Andy Pollin on the "The Sports Reporters" from 2000-2013 where they would discuss and dissect everything from the Redskins, Wizards, Nationals, Caps, Maryland basketball and football, local college basketball, golf and more. In August of 2013, Czabe teamed up with former Redskins TE Chris Cooley for "The Drive: With Cooley and Czabe" – a show that is currently the afternoon drive show on ESPN980 from 4-7 p.m.

While radio is Czabe's primary career, he does free lance work in local sports television. For two years during Redskins season, Steve teamed with Chick Hernandez and former NFL player Brian Mitchell on Comcast Sports Net in Washington D.C. to breakdown the game and interview guests on "Redskins Post Game Live." He has been part of NBC4's "Redskins Showtime" program with Clinton Portis. He has also been an infrequent contributor to Fox News Channel and the late Tony Snow's Weekend Live program. He also appears as a "talking head" on various shows such as the Today Show (on the Augusta National membership controversy) and ESPN Classic's "Who's Number 1" program among others. Steve also writes a weekly column and edits his website, Czabe.com, daily.

In his free time, Czabe is an avid golfer who is convinced that his handicap will never dip below an eight unless he is fired or wins the lottery! He also says that if he were President for a day, he would declare every Monday a national golf holiday. Steve created, in 2000, and directed a Ryder Cup style amateur golf event in the DC area called "The Potomac Cup" that ran until 2010.

Steve is married with two daughters and lives in Round Hill, VA.

#### **Ron Thomas**

Ron was born in Indianapolis, Indiana on March 10, 1970 to his parents Jim and Joan Voyles. He was one of 6 children and grew up attending open wheel races throughout the Midwest. His grandfather Johnnie Parsons won the 1950 Indy 500 and his family has 50 career starts in the same race.

Ron was introduced to golf by friends at the Zionsville Golf Club at the age of 10. He grew up playing golf and finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 1988 Indiana High School State Golf Championship. This was in addition to playing football where he served as the captain of the 1987 Indiana State High School Football Championship team at Zionsville High School. He received a scholarship to the University of Maryland where he not only earned his Bachelors degree but played for golf Fred Funk and Don Slebodnik.

Ron owns a medical equipment company, Medtraxx and is a member at The Cannon Club, where he serves as Chairman of the Golf Committee. He lists winning the 2004 MSGA State Publinks Championship and winning the 2019 Middle Atlantic Father Son Championship with his 11 year old son as two of his other golf accomplishments.

He is married to his wife Leanne for twelve years and they have a son Winston (11). Winston won the 2017 Middle Atlantic PGA Junior Tour Championship for the Mini-Mulligans.

#### **John Ronis, PGA**

John was born on December 6, 1968 in Westport, Connecticut to his parents Bill and Mary Ronis. He began playing golf at the early age of two when he was introduced by Don Saylor at River Bend Country Club. During the summers he would help at Wayland Country Club where he later became the Head PGA Professional.

John attended the University of Connecticut where he earned his Bachelors Degree in English and was either the number one or two player during his collegiate golf career. He also served as a three year captain of both his high school and college teams. John was a Massachusetts Amateur qualifying medalist and quarter finalist and was named the Massachusetts, Lowell Sun High School player of the year in 1987.

John was elected to PGA Membership in 1995 while he was the Head PGA Golf Professional at Wayland Country Club. Following that he was a First Assistant Professional a Congressional Country Club for a year before becoming the Director of Instruction at Woodmont Country Club where he remained for 19 years. He is currently the Executive Director of Instruction at River Creek Club, a position he accepted in 2018.

John currently coaches the Loudoun County High School Golf team. In addition to his accomplishments on the course he gives back to the community by serving as the President of Loudoun Aces Travel Baseball, an organization that serves over 200 children, and gives a scholarship in the name of his band (Just South of 7) to Loudoun County High School.

John and his wife Laura have been married for 23 years and they have two children; William (20) and Tommy (18).