

## Aurora Sports Hall of Fame's Class of 2023 - Laurie Buckland: Professional Golfer, Community Mentor, and Five-Sport Athlete



This is the first of four stories in our 2023 Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Inductee Profile series.

Laurie Buckland, long-time member of the CPGA and a much-respected golf professional at the Aurora Highlands Golf Club, Bradford Highlands, and Director of Golf at Wooden Sticks in Uxbridge, will be inducted posthumously into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame on November 1.

Buckland lost his battle with cancer in 2013 at the age of 66.

Paul Berry, Buckland's brother and best friend, remembers his golfing colleague fondly.

Berry, who was gracious enough to be interviewed by phone on Thanksgiving Monday, noted that "Laurie and I were best friends."

"We were young golf professionals at the same time and met at a golf tournament in the Bahamas in 1969. I started working as a professional in Georgetown, but we started working together at the Aurora Highlands in 1970."

Berry, who resides in Aurora, chuckles when he recounts one of Buckland's finest moments at Aurora Highlands.

"One of my favourite stories involving Laurie took place at the original Highlands course. Laurie was in a rush and barely had his shoes tied when we teed off. Laurie wanted to play through and doesn't he hit a hole-in-one on the second hole! He mentioned to the group that let us play through that "I didn't want to keep you guys waiting."

In addition to being an amazing "show and go" golfer, Berry also believes that Buckland is a very deserving Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductee.

"Laurie was more of a big brother to me than a friend and he was a terrific mentor to so many young men at the Highlands in the clubhouse; on the golf course; he taught swimming, too. For many at the Highlands, it was their first job and Laurie helped create their work ethic and their understanding of professionalism. Over 40 young men who started their working lives at the Highlands went to have very successful careers due to Laurie's mentoring."

In addition to his positive impact on the youth of the community, Berry also attests to his best friend's all-round athleticism that made him a prime candidate for induction into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame:

?He went to high school in Stouffville and Laurie was the captain of the basketball team, he played volleyball, and was a champion pole vaulter, too. He was also a very good squash player and played versus club champions from across Ontario.?

It's evident that five-sport athlete Laurie Buckland had a very positive impact on not only three area golf course communities as a professional, but he had an even bigger impact as a mentor to dozens of young people whose professional codes and work ethic were developed due to Buckland's timely collegiality.

**By Jim Stewart**