

Golf Canada recognizes local volunteer



Aurora Sports Hall of Fame inductee Jim Clark was presented the Honorary Life Governor award at Golf Canada's virtual annual meeting this month.

Speaking with The Auroran, Clark admitted he was completely shocked when he heard the news.

"For almost 130 years of Golf Canada, this honour has only been given to a past president," Clark said.

"I'm the first non-past president to get it. I was shocked because, I knew they could do that but it never crossed my mind or paid any attention to the fact that I could get it. The significance of it, as they said in the presentation, it's the highest volunteer honour that Golf Canada gives."

Clark was given the honour along with good-friend Barbara Allan of Kingston, ON.

Uniquely, both Allan and Clark are both inductees in their local hall of fames.

"On behalf of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, we are very excited of this recognition, that honoured member Jim Clark has received. It has really solidified the level of excellence in all of our honoured members on our roll," said President of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Javed Khan.

"This just showcases of not only excellence, but the high level of accomplishment that all of our honoured members have achieved in either their category of builder, or athlete or coach."

Now as an Honorary Life Member, Clark becomes a fully voting member of Golf Canada for life.

He will be part of inner workings within the board and will be providing advice and support in their decision-making.

Clark said Golf Canada had changed the by-law five years ago to provide non-past presidents the opportunity to be honoured. The board had altered the one-year presidential term to a two-year term. That said, this award would be given biennially.

Out of university as a young man, Clark began volunteering at the Canadian Open at Glen Abbey as a caddie. In doing so, he admitted he never really had a plan for the game.

"I enjoyed it. It was a fun week away from work. I took a week's holidays. I was in the computer business. It was a really nice

diversion from my job. So, I took a working holiday,? Clark chuckled.

?I kept going back. The leaders of the Canadian Open recognized that I was committed to it. So, they started giving me more and more responsibility, which I enjoyed. I kept going into the inner workings of the professional golf world and then was shockingly asked to chair the Canadian Open at Angus Glen in 2002. That was the ultimate highlight. I ended up doing it 11 times. I went from being this young volunteer on the caddie committee to being the chairman of the Canadian Open. And just how long it lasted.?

It's something Clark said he never thought possible.

Since the announcement, he has received many congratulations from life-long friends he has made in the game.

He will officially receive the award at the RBC Canadian Open that begins on June 6, at St. George's Golf Club in Toronto.

For anyone looking to get involved in golf and seeking out a similar pathway, Clark said to get involved at the grassroots level and bring your enthusiasm. People will recognize that.

Clark moved to Aurora in 1988 with his family. He immediately got involved with the Aurora Youth Soccer Club and is also an active volunteer with Aurora United Church.

He has been the Tournament Chair of the Canadian Open 11 times. He chaired the Canadian Women's Open twice in 2001 and 2019.

James Frederick Clark was inducted into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame in 2019, as a Builder/Contributor in golf.

You can read his full story online at aurorashof.ca.

By Robert Belardi