

PERFECT PARTNERS

For the first time in its 25-year history, the MGA's Distinguished Service Award is being presented to two people—Lois and Bill McTurk

by C.A. "Tony" Wimpfheimer

The work carried out on behalf of golf both in the Met Area and on a national level by Lois and Bill McTurk of Sleepy Hollow Country Club is unparalleled in MGA history. As they prepare to leave the Met Area to retire in State College, Pennsylvania, site of Bill's alma mater, the McTurks leave behind them a record of many years of deep commitment to golf. So it is the MGA's pleasure and honor to award the couple the Distinguished Service Award for 1997.

A native of Pittsburgh, Bill got hooked on golf during his senior year at Penn State (1947-48). Immediately after college, Bill took a job as a chemical engineer for Exxon in Linden, NJ, and there he met Lois, a graduate of Cornell University, who worked in industrial toxicology for the same company. "I chased her for seven years," says Bill, "and then she caught me."

They married in 1955, and in 1958 joined Forest Hill Field Club in nearby Bloomfield. Lois took up the game to avoid being a "golf widow" but soon was just as hooked as Bill. She served for a time as tournament chairwoman at Forest Hill before Bill's career took him to Europe for what would be a seven-year stint in Belgium and Italy.

From 1965 to '71 the McTurk's lived in Europe, belonging to the Royal Waterloo Golf Club while based in Brussels, and then Bergamo Golf Club outside Milan, Italy. There they pursued their golfing interests by playing in virtually any club event they could. "It was a great way to break out of the rut of always socializing with other American expatriates," observes Bill. "We played in all kinds of events and



Lois and Bill McTurk have been hooked on golf for the past four decades.

always got to play with local people. Through this we not only expanded our social circle but our appreciation of other people, other cultures, and of golf. It was a great experience."

Upon their return to the U.S., Bill and Lois moved to Scarborough-on-Hudson, NY, and soon afterward joined nearby Sleepy Hollow. A mutual respect for, and interest in, the Rules and traditions of the game soon found them both involved in committee work. "Both Bill and Lois were tireless workers," recalls former USGA President and Sleepy Hollow member Jim Hand, "and they had a relentless attention for detail and accuracy which made them valuable members of every committee they served on."

And there were many. Bill served as Green Chairman, was twice Golf Chairman, served for many years as Rules and Handicap Chairman, and twice was on the Board of Governors. Lois served twice as Tournament Chairman, was Women's Golf Chairman and Rules and Handicap Chairman for many years. She also wrote a comprehensive "Caddie Training Manual" which was used as a model for the MGA's own caddie training program. Together, Lois and Bill served as Tournament Co-chairmen for The Commemorative (a Senior PGA Tour event at Sleepy Hollow).

During this time Lois also became involved with the WMGA, serving on its Board from 1979-1983, as chairperson

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of its Interclub matches, then as Vice President in charge of tournaments, and finally as President. She also sits on the WMGA Past Presidents' Council.

Lois's expertise on the Rules grew quickly and eventually brought her to the national scene. She has served as a Rules Official at the U.S. Women's Open, the U.S. Women's Amateur, and the Curtis Cup Match. She was also a member of the USGA's Senior Women's Championship Committee from 1987 to '89 and was elected to the USGA Women's Committee, serving through 1996. She also became an expert course rater and pioneered and oversaw the introduction of the Slope System for women, and by women, in the Met Area. Lois was also a charter member of the USGA's Women's Handicap Procedure Committee, where she helped draft the first course-rating manual for women. Few people know it, because Bill is so well-known for his work on the MGA Course Rating Committee, but it was Lois who got Bill interested in this area. Says Anne Beard, former USGA Women's Committee Chair-

woman, "It's very unusual for someone who entered the game relatively late and who was basically a club [mid-handicap] golfer to become an expert in so many fields and rise to such prominence nationally. But Lois' keen mind and unique interest in every facet of the game, coupled with boundless energy, has been a great asset to the USGA, and to the game."

While it was hard to keep pace with Lois during his working years, Bill more than made up for it after he retired from Exxon in 1982. Joining the MGA as a volunteer tournament official, he soon became one of our hardest-working committeemen. When the USGA introduced "Slope" handicapping, Bill was instrumental in forging the MGA's smooth transition to the new system, and was a leader in the mammoth undertaking of re-rating the area's courses. He succeeded Jerry Benavie as Chair-



Above and right: Lois and Bill McTurk were early proponents of the USGA Slope System of course rating and handicapping.

man of the Handicap and Course Rating Committee in 1988 and has since developed a reputation as one of the country's most knowledgeable course rating experts.

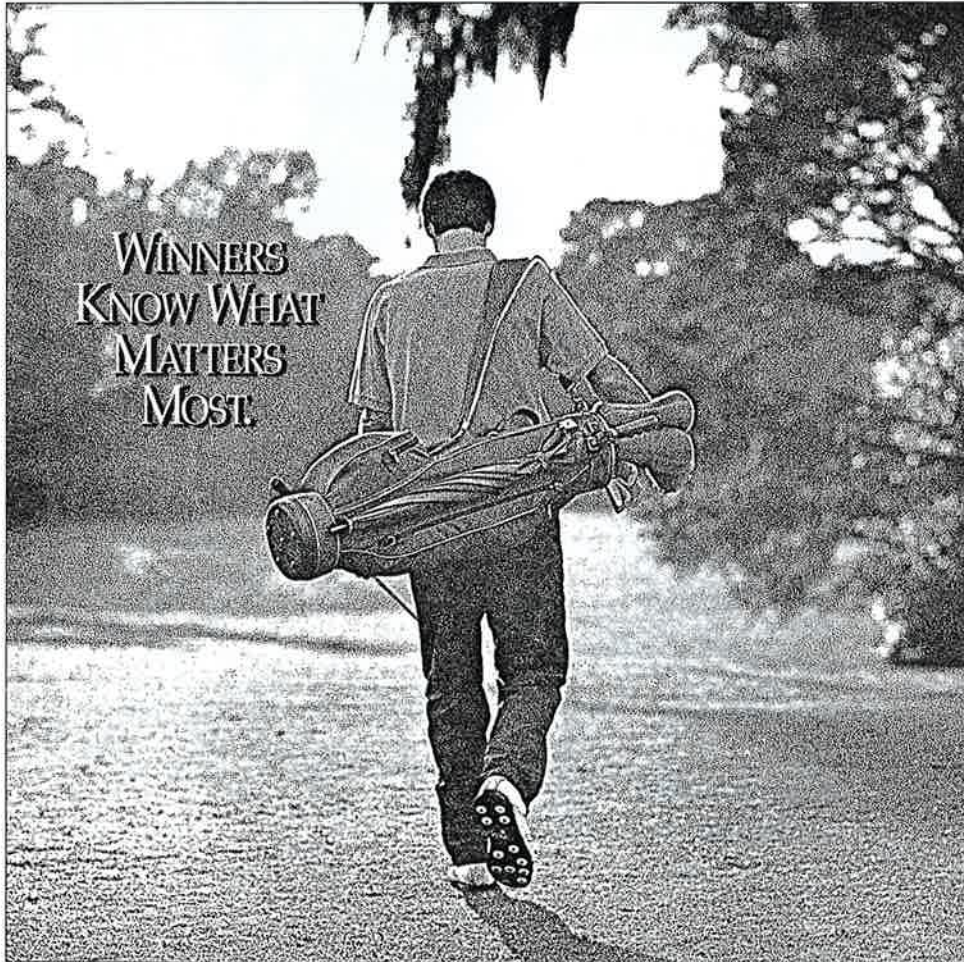
Because of their expertise, Bill and Lois were asked by the USGA to conduct a course rating seminar in Rome in 1995 for the Italian Golf Federation and participated earlier in a similar seminar

for the Puerto Rican Golf Association.

Bill also has worked on the MGA's Net Team Championship Committee; was a member of the President's Council (Chairman in 1992-1993) and the Public Information Committee; lectured on handicapping at the MGA's annual seminars; was a charter member of the Editorial Board of *The Met Golfer*, and served on the MGA Executive Committee from 1988-97. "Bill has been a great resource for the MGA and for me personally," says MGA Executive Director Jay Mottola. "Whatever the topic, Bill's thinking was always on the mark, and always reflected his genuine concern for and understanding of the subject."

Rarely do two such individuals' interests complement each other so naturally and make giving something back to the game part of their lives. In that respect they have truly enriched our own lives and we should not only congratulate them but thank them for making our golfing world a better place. ■

C.A. "Tony" Wimpfheimer is chairman of the Editorial Board of *The Met Golfer* and the winner of the MGA's Distinguished Service Award in 1996.



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