

TEXAS GOLF



HALL OF FAME

The Links. The Legends. The Legacy.

Texas Golf Hall of Fame reveals next chapter in state’s rich golf history, announcing Class of 2017: Kelli Kuehne, Steve Elkington, James E. “Buddy” Cook, Montford T. Johnson Jr., and Lions Municipal earn inductions.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 2017

Contact: Jerry D. Smith, Board Chair – 972.998.6770
Mary Carriker, Managing Director - 210.736.8701

_ Kelli Kuehne, one the most dominant female amateurs in golf history, 10-time PGA Tour winner Steve Elkington, and renowned PGA Golf Professional James E. “Buddy” Cook highlight the Texas Golf Hall of Fame Class of 2017.

Montford T. Johnson Jr., who helped shape policy for amateur golf through his roles with the U.S. Golf Association executive committee, will be honored for lifetime achievement, and Lions Municipal, Austin’s first public facility, will be added to the Texas Registry of Historic Golf Courses.

The Texas Golf Hall of Fame Board conducted the statewide nomination and voting process.

The 2017 inductees will be honored at the “The Gathering of Eagles” golf tournament and induction dinner on October 9th at Brackenridge Park Golf Course and San Antonio Country Club, respectively. Sponsorship opportunities are available; for information, please visit www.texasgolfhof.com.

The Texas Golf Hall of Fame is located at the Brackenridge Park Golf Course.

Kuehne, honored in the amateur player category, developed her competitiveness playing with her two brothers who also went on to remarkable golf careers that included national amateur titles. The Dallas native dominated junior and amateur events, capturing four consecutive 4A individual state titles (1992-95) while at Highland Park High School.

On the national stage, she claimed the 1994 U.S. Girls' Junior, the U.S. Women's Amateur in 1995 and 1996, and the British Ladies Amateur in 1996. An All-America at the University of Texas, she played on the 1996 Curtis Cup team before embarking on an LPGA Tour career highlighted by her 1999 Corning Classic victory and two Solheim Cup appearances. A diabetic since age 10, she has been a strong advocate for diabetes research. Her brother, Hank, won the 1998 U.S. Amateur before turning pro, and her brother, Trip, runner-up to Tiger Woods at the 1994 U.S. Amateur, won the 2007 U.S. Mid-Amateur. He was inducted into the Texas Golf Hall of Fame in 2015.

“It’s so exciting for me to be honored by the Texas Golf Hall of Fame,” Kuehne said. “I’m very humbled and grateful for the opportunities I was given. My parents always said there was no reason I couldn’t compete against my brothers, whether it was tackling in football or playing golf. That competitive environment was the key. My brothers were my ace in the hole.”

Elkington, honored in the professional player category, quickly established his Texas ties at the University of Houston.

The first prominent Australian to play college golf in the United States, Elkington helped the Cougars win national titles in 1982, 1984 and 1985. Settling in Houston after turning pro, Elkington went on to claim 17 titles, including 10 on the PGA Tour.

He posted 10 top-10 finishes in major championships, highlighted by his 1995 PGA Championship victory. He also captured the Vardon Trophy for lowest scoring average that year. Elkington is a two-time winner of The Players Championship, the PGA Tour's signature event, and played in the first four Presidents Cups for the International Team.

During his 40-year career, Cook has impacted virtually every phase of the golf industry in Texas and beyond. He left his mark as instructor on such luminaries as legendary Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry and country western star George Strait.

Cook’s influence can be measured in the achievements of the 24 professional apprentices he mentored, including Randy Smith, Warren Chancellor and Bill Harmon. Cook’s accomplishments can also be traced through the renowned courses he has served as PGA director of golf and/or head professional, including the Dominion CC, La Cantera GC, and Briggs Ranch GC in San Antonio.

Cook, the 1999 Southern Texas PGA Golf Professional of the Year, also served as tournament director of San Antonio's Champions Tour event, and as chairman of the Texas Golf Hall of Fame (2009-15).

The late Johnson, a 1945 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, served as president of the Amarillo Country Club and the Panhandle Golf Association (1989-94). As president of the of the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association board in 1967, he helped bring the prestigious Trans-Miss event to the San Antonio Country Club. He chaired three committees during his tenure on the U.S. Golf Association's Executive Committee, and served on the R&A's rules committee.

His dedication to the game brought numerous honors including the 1987 Byron Nelson Award from the Northern Texas PGA and enshrinement to the Texas Panhandle Sports Hall of Fame in 1986. His grandson is PGA Tour professional Johnson Wagner.

Lions Municipal, operated by the city since 1936, was Austin's first public course. Its rich history includes the 1950 exhibition match involving Ben Hogan, Harvey Penick, Morris Williams Jr. and Ed Hopkins. Upon arriving at the current No. 16 tee, Hogan left a lasting footnote calling the difficult par-4 "the only hole I've ever seen without a fairway."

The course impacted national history the next year when it became the first municipal facility in the South to racially integrate. The USGA formally recognized the desegregation as a milestone for the game.

_ Bill Nichols

