

World Golf Hall Of Fame Induction Ceremony

Monday, June 10 2019

Peggy Kirk Bell

Induction Speech



UNIDENTIFIED: When Mom was 17, she was too old to continue going to summer camp. One night at dinner, her father announced he joined the Finley Country Club, and the family could swim and play golf. Mom decided to try to play golf. She walked into the pro shop to purchase three golf balls and asked where is the first hole. Shortly after that, she returned to the pro shop and said, I lost all my balls before I got to the green. How do I grip this club? The head pro asked if she would like a lesson. And she replied, Yes. Can we go right now?

My mom was such a competitor. She wanted to play in every event she could find. She came to Pinehurst to play in the North South, and she was told at registration it was an invitational. Well, she was all embarrassed and she apologized, and then she crashed the party. Richard Tufts, president of Pinehurst, came out and extended an invitation for her to play that day. In 1949 she won the North South.

That same year she won the Eastern and the Women's Titleholders, and that earned her a spot on the 1950 Curtis Cup team. She was so proud to be on that team, she said it was her proudest moment in golf representing her country.

UNIDENTIFIED: Peg was never really given enough credit for being a great businesswoman, but it was her vision and willingness to take risks that led to the success she had for founding Pine Needles. Her passion for the game introduced so many to golf.

UNIDENTIFIED: She really didn't understand what people did in their free time if they didn't play golf. She thought everybody should play the game that she loved.

UNIDENTIFIED: Peggy Kirk Bell could have made the game all about herself. Instead, she made it about her students. After teaching all day in the driving range, she'd walk through the lounge or into the dining room at night and introduce herself to a guest. After a couple of minutes of conversation, she'd say: Show me your grip. You know, the grip is the most important fundamental in golf. It's our only connection to the club itself, and the grip controls the club face.

Then she'd wander over to another table. And I can only imagine the person she had just met saying, did I just get a grip lesson from Peggy Kirk Bell over my pecan pie? She was something special.

UNIDENTIFIED: When I think of Peg, the one word that best describes her is genuine. She may have been the most genuine person I've ever met. She was known as a great golf teacher, but she taught more than golf. She taught life lessons. And if you were fortunate enough to speak to Mrs. Bell, you always learned a little and you definitely left feeling a lot better. I think that was her greatest gift.

UNIDENTIFIED: In the late '90s we were at Muirfield watching the Memorial Tournament. Mom was on the Captains Club. And my mom said, you know, I would love to get a picture with Tiger. And so she walked over to him and she said, you know, Excuse me, can I get a picture with you? And he said, No, Mrs. Bell, I'd love to have a picture with you. That always struck me as such an interesting thing that he had such a high regard for her and her great career.

My mom would have been so humbled being inducted in the World Golf Hall of Fame with Billy, Dennis, Jan and Retief, and all the great ones before her, and yet she would have said, I don't know why you're inducting me. But all those who with knew her know why. She's not here to receive this award, but this is one she gets to enjoy with my dad.

(Daughters and son accept award on Peggy Kirk Bell's behalf.)

(Applause.)