

# World Golf Hall Of Fame Induction Ceremony

Wednesday, April 22 2020

## Susie Maxwell

## Berning

## Greg McLaughlin

### Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: Hello, everyone. I'm Brittany, Wynne, communications manager for the World Golf Hall of Fame. Thank you so much for joining us today as we welcome our fourth and final inductee of the class of 2021, Susie Maxwell Berning. I would like to introduce our CEO of the World Golf Foundation, Greg McLaughlin.

GREG McLAUGHLIN: Hi, Brittany. Thank you very much. We appreciate everyone joining us this afternoon, along with our fourth selection into the World Golf Hall of Fame, Susie Maxwell Berning. Congratulations on your selection for the induction into the class of 2021 in the female competitor category. Susie will join Tiger Woods, who was selected in the male competitor category, as well as contributors Marion Hollins and Tim Finchem, Marion selected in the golf architect category and Tim in the administrator category.

Susie, when we were going through the process, I of course saw the three stellar U.S. Open victories that you had, and you and Tiger Woods share that same number. What does it mean to you, Tiger winning three men's U.S. Opens and you winning three women's U.S. Opens? What does it mean for you to be inducted in the class, and then what does it mean to be inducted along with 15-time major winner Tiger Woods?

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, gee, what an honor. I really thank everybody from the World Golf Hall of Fame for selecting me. I never thought it would happen. But I'm thrilled. I'm honored. Gee, I reflect back on my golfing career, and it was a long time ago. I think I won -- I know I won all my Opens before Tiger was born. So anyway, it's an honor being inducted into the same class that he is, and with Marion and with Tim.

You know, golf has been great to me. It's just been wonderful, and throughout my golfing career I was able to raise a family, which just was the icing on the cake for me, and so that's one reason I didn't play as many



years or as many events as some. But when I did play, I enjoyed it.

**Q. I wanted to ask you, we had instances in recent years of Michelle Wie and Annika Sorenstam playing PGA TOUR events; I'm wondering in the 1960s, you played on your college men's team, and I'm wondering what kind of a stir did that create back then, and exactly how did that happen? How did the Oklahoma City University men's coach find out about you and get you on the team?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, you know, it was kind of a happening in Oklahoma City, they had a business organization of men called Golf Incorporated, and they actually gave four scholarships out a year to seniors in high school, and I got one of them, and then I think we got \$500 a semester going towards our books and tuition, and then Oklahoma City University did have a men's golf team, and since I lived in Oklahoma City, they had a desire to maybe start a women's golf team, so they gave me a scholarship, also. They didn't find any other girls that I guess they wanted to give a golf scholarship to. So Abe Lemons, who was a very famous basketball coach, he was our golf chaperone, so I played on the men's team, and Abe in fact nicknamed me "Sam," and to this day I think playing with the young boys, the young men helped me develop my golf game.

**Q. As far as social attitudes maybe back in the '60s, how were you received, and did you have to go through some comments and jokes and anything in particular like that?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Oh, I think one time I remember -- no, there wasn't very many times that there was any negative -- I remember one time we were playing a team in Wichita, and when I got out of the van, the coach from the Wichita team was there, and he said, well, Mr. Lemons, where is Steve or Sam, where is Sam Maxwell, and he said, here's Sam, and pointed to me.

One of the boys I know said, she's No. 4 on the team and I've got to play her? And his reaction was, wow, he was just shocked that he had to play. But there was no negative, and as I recall they were all very nice to me.

**Q. Of your three U.S. Opens, which one is the most memorable to you and why?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, they were all so different. You know, my first Open in '68 I had just been married seven weeks, and I think my mind was more on that than it was golf. And I think that made me relax a lot let's say. And then the '72 one and the '73 one, in 1970 I had my first child, and so when Robin was a year and a half old, I'm at Winged Foot playing, and then when she was two and a half in Rochester, and I'd get off the golf course and I wouldn't be thinking about my golf game, I'd be going home and going to where we were staying with friends and playing with my young daughter.

So I think those three things, or during those three events, my mind was more relaxed than some golfers who they'd go home and fret about their round and worry about the next day. So I think having those two years with a young baby and the first year of being just married probably helped me win Opens.

**Q. What do you consider the hardest part about trying to raise two girls and play golf? What was the biggest challenge for you?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, yeah, back then -- I keep saying "back then," but there was no service like they had now for the girls who have -- they have a trailer that takes the babies' equipment and strollers and everything. I had to withdraw from one tournament in San Diego because I couldn't find a babysitter. So it was a struggle finding a babysitter, and then I think eventually we started having a young girl go with us during the summer and traveling with us.

**Q. Where are you living now, by the way?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: I live in the Palm Springs area.

**Q. Which course do you work out of or play out of or teach out of?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: I teach at a course called The Reserve, and it's in Indian Wells, and been there for 19 years now, and just last year they made me an honorary member.

**Q. It took them 19 years?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Yeah, yeah.

**Q. Now you can tell them you're a Hall of Famer.**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Yeah.

**Q. In '72 when you won at Winged Foot East, I guess you played the 17th hole with 3-wood the first three days and you couldn't get there because it was playing so wet and long, but it was still -- you weren't the longest hitter so you had to hit wood, and then on Sunday in the final round you hit driver, a soft driver, I guess, and made birdie. Is**

**that the greatest shot of your career? How would you describe that moment?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: I'd have to say that probably is. I never gave it that much thought. But now that you brought it to my attention, I'd have to say so because Winged Foot played so long, and of course I wasn't a long hitter anyhow. To hit driver to this little par-3 green that was kind of elevated, I hit a high, soft drive. So I'd have to say that was probably, of all the shots that helped me win an Open, that was definitely the one because in '68 I just played good except for the last three holes every day, and in '73 I think I pretty much was leading the last day and then didn't have -- I wasn't scared of who was behind me in '73.

**Q. Yeah, you only won by one in '72.**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Yeah, and Judy Rankin was on my tail in '72, and then of course '68 Mickey Wright was on my tail.

**Q. How close did you hit that shot on 17, how far from the hole?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: I think it was about 20 feet, I think. And you know, at the time I didn't really know -- see, I started that round, I think, six shots back, and I think Carner was leading, if my memory serves me correctly, Carner was in contention, and then she didn't have a very good day. But I don't think I felt pressure until after the 15th hole. I think I birdied a par-5 or made a good par, and then I felt pressure definitely on the 18th tee box because I skied my driver and had to hit a 5-wood into the green where normally it was about a 5-iron. But I recall Flick telling me, if you sky a shot it's still the sign of a good swing. So that took some pressure off my mind.

**Q. Would you mind describing yourself in terms of as a player, the type of player you were?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, I didn't make a lot of birdies. That's for sure. I was a good par player. I think I tried -- it's crazy, but I think I tried harder when the putt was for par than it was for birdie. I know that doesn't make much sense, but par just meant something to me. Fortunately I think for me, the Open courses were so tough that par was a good score. You look at all back in the '60s and '70s, over par probably won all Opens. And now they're way under par.

**Q. How did the type of player that you were influence you in terms of your teaching? Did it help you become a great teacher?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, of course after I left the Tour, I started working for the Nicklaus-Flick Golf Schools, and just listening to Jack and being around Jim and listening to Jim and of course Jim had been my teacher since about '67, but Jim's impressed on -- he wasn't mechanical only. He didn't teach one

way. He worked with your body type and your flexibility and your age.

I still believe that we should swing the golf club. We don't try and hit the ball with our core. My hands are the most important thing I have in golf. And then the second most important thing is my feet. That's the way I played. I swung the club.

**Q. What item will you be putting in your Hall of Fame locker?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, could be one of the gold-plated putters that I had when I won one of the Opens from Ping. When you won a golf tournament using a Ping putter you got a gold-plated one. So I'm going to say one of those gold-plated putters.

**Q. Any item that you plan on putting in that maybe defines you off the golf course?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: A picture of my horse or a picture of my daughters.

**Q. And then the other question is you played at a time with some of the best players on the LPGA. Who did you enjoy playing against the most during your career?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Ooh, of course Mickey was a joy to play with. Patty Berg was very pleasant to play with. You know, they were all really nice to me when I was a rookie out there, and even in my earlier years. Judy Rankin, I always enjoyed playing with her because we were both -- didn't hit it real far. I learned a lot, I think, from watching Mickey and how she focused so hard.

**Q. I'd be curious if you've given any thought to who would present you or introduce you at the induction, and who were you closest with when you played?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, of course Judy Rankin, she was maid of honor in my wedding, and we are still friends to this day. We communicate a lot and see each other, and when she comes here to do the television for The Golf Channel, we always play the Reserve and everything. You know, I don't know. I have a brother, Roger Maxwell, who's in golf, and he was director of golf for Marriott for years and head professional at several different clubs and had a great In Celebration of Golf store. So maybe him. I don't know, I haven't given it much thought.

**Q. You were born in California, moved to Oklahoma as a teenager, and who got you started in golf and why, and why did you stick with it?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, I want to say, I got started in golf because of horses. I know that sounds unusual, but my family didn't play. They had a rental

house about maybe a mile from a public golf course called Lincoln Park, and my three brothers, two of them were caddying at this golf course during the summer, and I had two horses, one was a colt, and on this public golf course was a bridle path, and the bridle path was built there because the Shriners had very elaborate stables with all their palomino horses.

Anyway, I was on the bridle path one day taking the colt out on a lead, first time out of the pasture, and the colt got spooked and I lost hold of the lead rope and it ran down some fairways and over a couple of greens and I ran after the colt, and there's these guys in Cushman vehicles chasing me yelling, and the colt finally got to a stream and she'd never been in water before, so she stopped. I caught her. They took me to the pro shop, and the pro comes out, and I'm crying, scared to death that they're going to call the police, and the pro looks at me and says, I've seen you before, and I said -- I think I said, yeah, I came over here to ask if I could caddie; you told me girls don't caddie. And I think he felt sorry for me, and he said, well, we're not going to call the police. He asked me where I lived and I told him, and he said, tell you what, you teach my two young children how to ride and we'll forget this ever happened.

So every Saturday I did, I'd have his two children come over and I'd teach them about horses, and he kept asking me to come to the golf course, and he found out I played softball and played other sports. I said, no, that silly game, I used to try to bend over galloping and pick up a golf ball and throw it. I did it off the bridle path, of course.

But needless to say, one day he calls me up, and he says, I really want you to come over to Lincoln Park. There's something I want to show you. And I said, can I ride my horse. He said, yeah, tie it up behind the pro shop. And he took me down this hill, and there was a bunch of people down there laughing up a storm. Well, it was Patty Berg giving a clinic, and I said to myself, oh, boy, she's having a lot of fun. If that's what golf is about, I think I want to try it.

So I guess that was the beginning.

**Q. Do you still ride?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: I haven't in recent years. I had hip replacement about a year and a half ago, so I haven't ridden since then.

**Q. I wanted to ask you a couple more questions about raising your family while playing. I was curious, who else on Tour with you might have also been a mother when your children were young and who you might have consulted about how to juggle -- or maybe someone who came after you who you**

**gave advice about how to juggle?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, Judy Rankin, her son Tuey was about a year older than my daughter Robin. So when I came out on Tour with my first child Robin, Tuey had already -- Judy and Tuey had been out there for about a year, and Judy gave me a lot of guidance, told me who to contact to find babysitters and stuff.

I'm trying to think who else. Murle Breer, her family was, I think, probably teenagers by the time I got out there and had my children, and then after me really there was Juli Inkster, but she was quite a few years after me, and Gerda Boykin -- not Gerda Boykin, I'm sorry. Mrs. Blackwelder, Myra Blackwelder, she raised some young -- her family was out there. They were pretty young. They were younger than mine, I think. I think she had two boys. But there were very few of us that tried to play the Tour and had young children out there at the time. And of course I didn't play -- that's why I didn't play much. After 1977, I only played in the summer because then Robin was school age, and we weren't going to yank her out of school for me to go play.

**Q. I believe at least one of your daughters played college golf. What was it like getting her into the game, and did your other daughter play?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Yeah, Robin was funny, she did swimming and she did soccer and she's built kind of like me, maybe a hair taller, but until she was 15 she didn't dare think about touching a golf club, and then the next thing we know she's got a golf scholarship to San Jose State and then she was transferred to Ohio State where T-bird, Therese Hession was her coach. And Robin still to this day has a great swing. Daughter Sandy has a good swing, but she doesn't play much.

They both caddied some on Tour. One would caddie for me and the other would caddie for Lenore Rittenhouse, and I think Sandy caddied for Patty Sheehan a couple times. So they had good times. Once they got old enough to caddie, they enjoyed the Tour, I think.

**Q. Was it a requirement that they learn to play, or they kind of did that on their own, they got interested?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, Robin all of a sudden decided that -- she went to a private school. We lived on the big island of Hawai'i at the time and she went to a private school called HPA and you had to take a sport, and I think Robin tried several, and she tried golf, and she got -- after the first year and a half, I remember it was such a struggle the first year and a half, but then she got where she really started enjoying it, I think. And she did play -- we were the first mother-

daughter to ever play in an LPGA event in San Jose.

And Sandy, my youngest, has a good swing but never really had a lesson, but she just watched Patty Sheehan swing a lot. Her swing looks a lot like Patty's.

**Q. What kind of horse do you have, and what's his name?**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: Well, I don't have him anymore. They were quarter horses. They weren't real expensive. After my father was asked to take care of these two horses with one of his coworkers who was transferred out of state, and the coworker never came back. So I was like 13 years old when my father was taking care of these horses, and my dad I remember saying we can't afford to keep them, and I said, no, no, I'll try and find money to feed the horses. So that's when I went over and asked if I could caddie.

But they weren't expensive horses. My gosh, when I was 16 I ended up selling them for \$150 so I could buy a car, so I started driving to the golf course. But they were just good old Californians. I tried a rodeo bit once because I had two horses and only one saddle and I had to ride bareback when I took my friends riding, but my rodeo experience, I fell off doing barrel racing. That was the end of that one.

**Q. I misunderstood, I thought you still had a horse now.**

SUSIE MAXWELL BERNING: No, no.