USGA Media Center

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- The USGA will present its highest honor, the Bob Jones Award, to longtime Oakmont (Pa.) Country Club professional Bob Ford in a ceremony on June 13, 2017, during the week of the 117th U.S. Open Championship at Erin Hills in Erin, Wis.

Presented annually since 1955, the Bob Jones Award recognizes an individual who demonstrates the spirit, personal character and respect for the game exhibited by Jones, winner of nine USGA championships.

Ford, considered one of the game's great ambassadors, served as the head professional at Oakmont, a nine-time U.S. Open host site, for 37 years before retiring in October. He continues to work in a similar capacity at Seminole Golf Club in Juno Beach, Fla.

"We are proud to recognize Bob Ford with the USGA's highest honor, for exhibiting the ideals and traditions of the game brought forth by Bob Jones," said Diana Murphy, USGA president. "Bob has set the gold standard in his profession and has left an indelible mark on countless young club professionals whom he has mentored. He has instilled in each of them a passion, love, and appreciation for the game through his exemplary character, humility and respect for people. He is the best at what he does and uses his skills and time to bring out the best in them."

During his tenure at Oakmont, the Philadelphia-area native served as a mentor to more than 100 golf professionals, instilling the values of honor and hard work that he continues to espouse. A gifted player, administrator and teacher, Ford left an indelible mark on the membership and the staff over more than four decades of service.

"I was blown away by President Murphy's call," said Ford, who started at the club in 1975 as an assistant to 1947 U.S. Open champion Lew Worsham. "Being selected as the first PGA club professional to win the award makes it ever more special. I'm not so sure I belong in the company of former recipients, but nonetheless I'm very flattered and humbled. Bob Jones has impacted all the lives of those who serve and play this great game. Arnold and Jack were his friends and hold him in the highest regard and they both have handed the game down to my generation as Bob Jones did for them."

During Ford's tenure at Oakmont, he played a valuable role in helping the USGA provide the game's grandest stage for four U.S. Opens.

"Throughout his lengthy career at Oakmont, Bob has been a friend to me and a generous host to the USGA," said Mike Davis, executive director/CEO of the USGA. "He has worked closely with us on eight championships, including four U.S. Opens. During that time he never said no, never walked away and never failed to offer support. He shares the spirit and dedication to the game of golf that were the hallmarks of Bob Jones' life."

Ford's impact on club professionals and advocacy for the game have translated to partners and professionals throughout the sport.

"During my eight years with Bob at Oakmont, I watched as he made the transition from assistant professional to head professional," said Jack Druga, PGA head professional at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, which will host its fifth U.S. Open in 2018. "There were no policies, procedures or manuals; we watched him in action. He led by example and made a significant impact on how I handle myself and what I bring to the job."

In addition to his contributions to his profession, Ford is an accomplished player who qualified for three U.S Opens, two U.S. Senior Opens and 10 PGA Championships. Ford also served as president of the Tri-State PGA from 1994-98 and has received four national awards: 1985 and 1997 PGA National Merchandiser of the Year, 1987 PGA National Professional of the Year and 1988 PGA National Club Professional of the Year.

The Pittsburgh City Council acknowledged Ford's contribution to the community during the 2016 U.S. Open by declaring it "Bob Ford Week."

Ford, 63, and his wife, Nancy, have three children, daughter Kelly and sons Jay and Chandler.

Ford joins a list of Bob Jones Award winners that includes national champions such as Francis Ouimet (1955), Babe Didrikson Zaharias (1957), Arnold Palmer (1971), Jack Nicklaus (1975), Ben Hogan (1976), Annika Sorenstam (2012) and Payne Stewart (2014), as well as those who have contributed to the fabric of the game in other meaningful ways, such as Richard S. Tufts (1967), Joe Dey (1977), Bing Crosby and Bob Hope (1978), P.J. Boatwright Jr. (1993), President George H.W. Bush (2008), Barbara Nicklaus (2015) and 2016 winner Judy Bell. A complete list of winners can be found here.

Photo Link:
An official photo of Mr. Ford can be accessed via the following link: USGA TO HONOR BOB FORD WITH 2017 BOB JONES AWARD

About the USGA
The USGA celebrates, serves and advances the game of golf worldwide. Founded in 1894, we conduct golf's premier professional and amateur championships, including the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open. With The R&A, we govern the sport via a global set of playing, equipment and amateur status rules. Our operating jurisdiction for these governance functions includes the United States, its territories and Mexico. The USGA Handicap System is utilized in more than 40 countries and our Course Rating System covers 95 percent of the world's golf courses, enabling all golfers to play on an equitable basis. The USGA campus in Liberty Corner, New Jersey, is home to the Association's Research and Test Center, where science and innovation are fueling a healthy and sustainable game for the future. The campus is also home to the USGA Golf Museum, where we honor the game by curating the world's most comprehensive archive of golf artifacts. To learn more, visit usga.org.

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