FAR HILLS, N.J. (July 26, 2017) – Since the late 1800s, a small but influential group of women have carved a space of their own in golf, using the one tool that most influences a player's experience: the golf course. The USGA Golf Museum's new exhibit, "Breaking New Ground: Women and Golf Course Architecture," explores this rarely discussed segment of golf history and recounts unique narratives of female leadership, initiative and innovation.

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Artifacts from the museum collection, in addition to loans from the United Kingdom and local historical archives, illustrate how women have influenced golf course design theory and played a role in creating more equitable and enjoyable experiences for all who play the game.

Curated by USGA historian Victoria Student, the exhibit officially opened on July 12, the eve of the 72nd U.S. Women's Open Championship. Players in the championship field were given a sneak preview at a private welcome reception on Tuesday of U.S. Women's Open week at the USGA Golf Museum, located a few short miles from the championship site and on the grounds of the USGA headquarters.

"These incredible women not only shaped the dialogue surrounding how courses could be more welcoming to other women - they also inspired new generations to build careers and opportunities in golf," said Diana Murphy, president of the USGA. "We all have something to learn from their ingenuity and passion for the game, and the USGA couldn't be prouder to showcase their contributions."

Since the turn of the 19th century, women have adapted courses to better suit female playing abilities, and have established separate clubs to serve as places of recreation and competition. "Breaking New Ground" tells the stories of several early women's golf clubs, such as the St. Andrews Ladies' Golf Club (1867), Carnoustie Ladies Golf Club (1873) and Morris County Golf Club (1894).

Located less than 30 miles from the present-day USGA campus, Morris County Golf Club was the first all-women's golf club to become a USGA Associate Member Club. The exhibit displays the letter dated June 21, 1895 to the club's president, Nina Howland, communicating the unanimous approval by the USGA Executive Committee for the club's Associate Membership, granting full voting rights.

The exhibit also features artifacts from women who pioneered the male-dominated golf course architecture field. Beginning with Ida Dixon and May Dunn, and continuing into the 1930s with Molly Gourlay, Britain's first female golf course architect and trusted assistant to Tom Simpson, the groundwork laid by these women culminates with Marion Hollins, the well-connected visionary behind Women's National Golf and Tennis Club on Long Island and Pasatiempo Golf Club in Santa Cruz, Calif.

Selected writings and course sketches by Alexa Stirling, a three-time U.S. Women's Amateur champion and member of the inaugural USGA Women's Committee, exemplify the demand throughout history for golf course design to take diverse audiences into account, as well as the collaborative effort by the world's top female players to improve the game they loved.

Modern-day architects Alice Dye and Jan Bel Jan, along with industry movers-and-shakers Arthur Little and Jan Leeming, bring "Breaking New Ground" into the present and future, as the exhibit displays videos highlighting their work to increase playability and accessibility through course design and set up.

"Breaking New Ground" will be on display at the USGA Golf Museum, located at 77 Liberty Corner in Far Hills, N.J., through December 2018. The museum is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.

Entry is $10 for adults and $5 for USGA Members; kids 12 and under enter free, and includes access to the Hall of Champions, as well as rooms dedicated to Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan and Mickey Wright. Ticket holders

for the 2017 U.S. Women's Open Championship enter free until the end of the year.

All who visit will also have access to the USGA's Pynes Putting Course, testing their skills with historic replica clubs or modern putters on the nine-hole layout.

For more information on the USGA Golf Museum,click here.

Note to Editors: Photos of the golf museum and display pieces can be downloaded here: USGA Museum Exhibit-Breaking New Ground: Women and Golf Course Architecture

About the USGA

The USGA celebrates, serves and advances the game of golf. Founded in 1894, we conduct many of 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 is 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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