

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. (June 13, 2019) – The USGA honored 2019 Bob Jones Award winner Lee Elder on Wednesday, June 12 at the Inn at Spanish Bay as part of its week-long celebration of golf.

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.

Elder is its first African American to receive the USGA’s highest honor.

VIPs from the worlds of sports and entertainment attended the dinner to celebrate Elder, including Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Jim Nantz. In his speech, Player specifically noted Elder’s courage in accepting an invitation to play in South Africa despite the Apartheid occurring.

A link with photos from the event can be found [here](#) under “visual assets.”

Elder burst onto the PGA Tour in 1968, taking Jack Nicklaus to a playoff in the American Golf Classic. He used his newfound fame to introduce disadvantaged youths to the game through a variety of means, including after-school programs at Langston Golf Course in Washington, D.C. and establishment of the Lee Elder Scholarship Fund to help young men and women attend college.

Overcoming personal tragedy and discrimination, he became the first African American to play in the Masters Tournament, as well as the first African American to earn a spot on a Ryder Cup team.

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.