



2021

Dominic and Eileen Antenucci

In 1959, 12-year-old Dominic Antenucci took his first job in golf cleaning locker rooms, caddying, and working grounds at the Seneca Golf Course in Broadview Heights, Ohio. 60 years later he retired as the Executive Director for the Northern Ohio PGA (NOPGA). Eileen Antenucci forged her own career in the golf industry managing golf shop operations, merchandising, tournament logistics, and directing junior golf programs for the NOPGA. She retired as Junior Golf Director in 2020.

Both Dominic and Eileen attended Garfield Heights High School. As a student, Dominic started the school's first golf program in 1963. He also participated in basketball, football, and track while in high school. While in high school Dominic and Eileen Tyler met and began to date. During this time Dominic also started playing competitive junior golf in the state and became friends with Rene Powell, the 2008 winner of the Betty Kerby Peppard (BKP) Award.

In the fall of 1966 Dominic attended Kent State University and was drafted out of Kent during the Vietnam War. At that time he decided to join the United States Air Force as his chosen branch of service. After attending basic training, Dominic was fortunate to be stationed at a security base in the Puglia region of Italy for three and half years. Dominic enjoyed Italy so much that he wanted Eileen to join him. Dominic planned their wedding and had her wedding gown handmade by a local tailor. Eileen took her first plane ride and joined Dominic in Italy in 1968. They were 20 and 21 when they married in Brindisi, Italy. While there, Dominic started a golf team on the base that later competed against other U.S. military teams in Europe. The pair were able to travel extensively through Europe representing the 6917th Security Group, Brindisi, Italy. Dominic and Eileen returned to the United States in December 1972 after his honorable discharge from the Air Force.

Upon his return to the United States, Dominic contacted the President of the NOPGA, Don Perne (PGA Professional at Shaker Heights CC). Don found Dominic a job in the golf business as an assistant to Joe Stoddard at Belmont Hills CC in St. Clairsville, Ohio. Eileen became Joe's pro shop assistant, managing the merchandise and tee times. One of the members at Belmont Hills Country Club at that time was Martha Martin, the 2006 winner of the BKP Award. After one season in the golf business at Belmont Hills CC, and under the encouragement of Joe Stoddard, Dominic accepted the Head Professional job at Alliance CC. Eileen continued to work in the golf business and was responsible for merchandising and bookkeeping for the golf shop. While at Alliance CC their two children, Dino and Amanda, were born.

In 1980 Dominic accepted the Head Professional position at Club Walden, and the family moved to their home in Aurora, where they still live today. Eileen continued to manage the bookkeeping and merchandising for the golf shop. While at Club Walden, a member and 16-year-old employee of Dominic's, Kenny Novak, was tragically killed in an accident trying to save a friend. Dominic was the NOPGA Junior Golf Chairman at the time and along with Eileen and the Walden members, they started the NOPGA Kenny Novak Junior Golf Championship, which is still the NOPGA junior championship, 40 years later.

After nine years at Walden, Dominic took a position at Avon Oaks CC as their Head Professional. While at Avon CC Dominic gave lessons, ran tournaments, and worked seven days a week during the golf season. On Mondays, when he gave his staff the day off, Dominic and Eileen ran outings for charities and outside groups. Eileen learned how to run tournaments and score events. While working at Avon Oaks CC Dominic was awarded the 1990 NOPGA Professional Of The Year as well as the 1990 Junior Golf Leader. He was later awarded



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the NOPGA Merchandiser Of The Year in 1992 and 1993. While at Avon Oaks CC Dominic served on the board of the Ohio Girl's Golf Foundation with Patty Jacobson, Teen Burke, Betty Peppard, and Mary Ann Bierman, past winners of the BKP Award.

After spending 25 years in PGA Head Professional roles, Dominic moved to the NOPGA as Executive Director. His duties included promoting employment of the PGA professionals, supporting tournament operations for area professionals, finances, sponsorships, and management of the NOPGA Las Vegas Pro-AM, for 20 years. He was inducted into the Northern Ohio PGA Hall of Fame along with Joe Flogge in 2008.

Eileen started her work in the NOPGA office as a volunteer. Eileen found that she loved working in junior golf and was hired to run operations for the NOPGA Junior Golf Program. As part of her work, Eileen ran tournaments which included tournament site scheduling, marketing, scoring, parent communication, and prize purchasing. She also operated a Junior Golf Newsletter and program website. She was responsible for running the Pup's Tour (9 holes, age 11 and under), NOPGA Junior Golf Tour (18 holes, ages 12-19), and the National Junior PGA Championship. Eileen also started the Collegiate Tour and Fall Fun Days. As the membership

grew, Eileen developed and managed an internship program, which was responsible for training over 30 individuals on work in the golf industry. During her tenure, membership in the Junior program grew from 250 to 600 young people, with 35 tournaments annually. The NOPGA Junior Golf Tour became one of the most successful junior golf programs in the Northern Ohio area. Many of the NOPGA junior tournament players and interns have played in the Ohio State Women's Golf Association Tournaments.

For 21 years the Antenuccis worked alongside David Griffith and Lynne Plaisance. This team worked proudly together to make golf a better game in Northern Ohio. Today the NOPGA continues to be run with David and Lynne at the helm as Executive Director and Director of Operations.

Dominic and Eileen retired from the business of golf in December of 2019. Their greatest joy is spending time with their adult children and spouses, and their grandchildren, Adin and Abby. In June of 2020 they adopted a six-year-old pandemic puppy, Nucci. She keeps them busy walking miles around the Walden development on most days. Dominic and Eileen would like to congratulate the previous winners and feel honored to accept this award in the memory of Betty Kerby Peppard.