

BUFFALO GREATS

A look at *some* of the greats in Colorado golf history, including conference champions, multiple record holders and major tournament winners, and/or those who have made their mark professionally.

At Colorado (1953-56): The first Buffalo to win Big 7 Conference medalist honors when he won with a 216 score in the 1954 meet, he helped Colorado to the team title, its first Big 7 crown in golf. Emerging as CU's No. 1 golfer as a sophomore in the spring of 1954, he was the first and remains the only soph in school history to win a conference medalist honors. By tying for 10th in 1955 and eighth in 1956 in the league meet, he became the first (and to date, still one of just five) CU players to have recorded three top 10 finishes in the conference championships. He is believed to have compiled a 25-10-2 record in dual match play, a pretty impressive figure for a No. 1 man, and led CU to the NCAA Championships in both 1954 and 1955.

KEITH ALEXANDER



At Colorado (1950-53): Colorado's first national champion in golf, as he won NCAA medalist honors in 1953 at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, when he recorded a 69-68—137 scorecard for a then-NCAA record 7-under par; it was in the day when the field was pared to the low 64 after medal play, and despite losing in the first round of match play, he became only CU's fourth national champion in its athletic history at the time (joining three track performers: Gil Cruter, Dave Bolen and Warren Bateman). The 137 was a record at the time as well, besting the old mark of 138 set by a most familiar name in 1950: Wake Forest's Arnold Palmer. In the Big 7 Championships, he finished ninth as a sophomore and third as a senior.

MERLE BACKLUND



At Colorado (1978-82): The first and to date only golfer in Colorado history to play in four NCAA Championships, as he went individually as a freshman in 1979 (also a first and only) and as a senior in 1982 and with the full Buff contingent in 1980 and 1981. He finished second in the 1979 Big 8 Championships, to date the highest finish ever by a Colorado freshman in a conference championship meet. He tied for 5th in the 1981 event and for seventh in the '82 affair, making him one of just five Buffs to have recorded three top 10 finishes in league championship play. His third place finish at the 1978 Falcon Invitational would stand as the best by a CU freshman in his first meet for 21 years. The summer after he completed his CU eligibility, he pulled off the rare sweep in winning both the Colorado State Stroke and Match Play championships. He was a third-team All-American in both 1981 and 1982.

RICK CRAMER



Professionally: He played briefly on the PGA Tour but did play several seasons on some of the other pro tours, and is currently involved in administration and operations for the Gateway Tour Series in the Phoenix area.

At Colorado (1956-59): Owned a career stroke average of 74.11 as a Buff, playing in an era where dual matches were the norm and tournaments were the exception. He posted three top 10 finishes in the Big Seven/Eight Championships, tying for eighth as a freshman in the '56 Big 7 meet, and taking seventh and fifth in the '58 and '59 Big 8 tests, respectively; he was the second Buff (and still one of just five) to record three top 10 finishes in conference championship play.

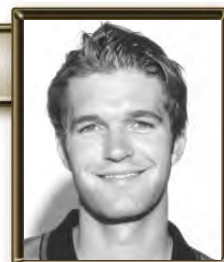
Professionally: A member of the Champions Tour since he turned 50 in 1986, he had 11 victories on what was formerly known as the Senior Tour. He became just the fifth player in history to play in 500 tournaments when he reached the mark in 2003. He starred on the PGA Tour after turning pro in 1960, winning three events. Now more or less retired, he won just under \$7.5 million on the Champions Tour and over \$9 million as a professional. He has played in 600 Champions Tour events, with 151 top 10 finishes along with 283 in the top 25.

DALE DOUGLASS



At Colorado (1994-99): He led the team in stroke average all four of his playing seasons, one of just two Buffs to do so (with Steve Jones), but they weren't in consecutive years as he redshirted after his true junior season. He led the Buffs at the 1995 NCAA Central Regional in 1995, tying for 14th, and played in one other NCAA meet (in 1999 as a senior). He played 133 rounds, and with 127 counting toward team scoring, he set the school record for percentage counted (95.5). He had a career stroke average of 74.34, and he had 11 top 10 and 22 top 20 finishes in his career. Over the course of his career, he was the top Buffalo scorer in 27 tournaments, the most in school history.

KNUT EKJORD



At Colorado (1945-76): He tied for fourth in the first Big 7 Conference championship meet Colorado ever played in, as he recorded a 147 score for 36 holes in the 1948 meet. Following his graduation, he would coach the Buffaloes on a volunteer basis for a total of 29 seasons, actually starting as a player-coach his senior year. His top players out of over 125 that played for him included Hale Irwin, Dale Douglass, John Hamer, Gary Polumbus, Larry McAtee, Bill Musselman, Tom Woodard, Mark Crabtree and the man who succeeded him as head coach, Mark Simpson. His teams won three conference titles and reached the NCAA Championships seven times, with the 1968 team posting the school's best ever national finish when it tied for eighth. He was a district manager in the insurance business, and active in Boulder politics as a city councilman and state representative and state senator. Though he never played professionally, he was one of the states top amateur golfers for four decades, including senior golf, and is a member of the state of Colorado Golf Hall of Fame. He passed away on February 8, 2003 at the age of 78 in Boulder.

LES FOWLER



At Colorado (2004-09): He finished 14th in the most rounds played (113) at Colorado, finishing 16th in career stroke average (74.45), ninth in top 5 finishes (7), sixth in top 10 finishes (12) and ninth in top 20 efforts (18). As a senior, he was the Co-Male Athlete of the Year at Colorado for all sports (with teammate Derek Tolan), he played in all 13 tournaments, with two wins, five top 5, eight top 10 and 10 top 20 finishes. He earned PING All-Region honors and was an honorable mention All-American, finishing as the No. 46 ranked player in the nation (Golfweek). He recorded a 71.98 stroke average for the season, the third best in school history (and his 71.32 average during the spring the second best, just .02 off the record). His outstanding spring was topped by his victory in CU's Stevinson Ranch Invitational, where he cruised to the win with an 8-under par 208 score. His top fall highlight was his first career collegiate win, when a 67-69-68—204 scorecard earned him medalist honors at Denver's Ron Moore Invitational at Green Valley Ranch GC in Denver. The 12-under par effort matched John Lindberg's school record for the most strokes under par that he set in the 1989 BYU Classic. He was named the *Golfweek* National Player-of-the-Week for the week ending Sept. 22 after he won the DU-Ron Moore invite, and in the process was believed to be the first player in CU history to be afforded such an honor. He turned pro following his senior year, and won the Adams Tour's Coca-Cola Wal-Mart Open (in Louisiana) in March 2010.

PATRICK GRADY



At Colorado (1961-64): He helped CU to a tie for 18th in the 1964 NCAA Championships, tying for 36th individually (73-78—151), the same year he tied for fifth in the Big Eight Championships (73-71-71—215), as he led the Buffs to a third place finish. Dual meets were more the norm for his day, and as a senior, he posted one of the best dual marks in school history, going 14-2 on the year, with a low round of 68.

After CU: He opted not to pursue a professional career, but took the state of Colorado by storm in the amateur ranks. He owns 10 CGA state titles, including four individual championships (1969 and 1970 Stroke Play; 1992 and 1996 Senior Stroke Play). He was the state amateur of the year in 1969, is one of only three players to ever win back-to-back stroke play titles, and was inducted into the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame in 2002.

JOHN HAMER



At Colorado (1964-67): The 1967 NCAA individual champion, winning by two strokes with a 2-under par 286 score, an effort that saw him post a 65 in the third round which included a hole-in-one. The all-time CU leader in tournaments won (4), he also racked up two medalist honors in Big 8 Conference play, winning the 1966 title outright and sharing the '67 crown when he was a first-team All-American. His 72.04 stroke average as a junior still reigns as a CU single-season best, as are his eight rounds in the 60s that year, and he is one of just five players to have led the Buffs in average three or more seasons. He earned a combined six letters in football and golf; after playing quarterback as a sophomore, he became a two-time first-team all-Big Eight selection at weak side safety 1965 and 1966, making nine interceptions (in 1989, he was selected to the 25-member All-Century Football Team for CU's first 100 years of football). He was inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame in 1986 and CU's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2002 (in the school's fourth class).

HALE IRWIN



Professionally: The all-time money winner on the Champions (Senior) Tour with \$26.6 million in earnings (and he has over a \$6 million advantage over No. 2 Gil Morgan). He won 20 times on the PGA Tour, including three U.S. Opens (1974, 1979, 1990); had 45 Champion Tour wins through 2012, including two U.S. Senior Open crowns (1998, 2000); and 18 other professional wins including international play. Entering 2013, he has made the cut in an incredible 398 of 402 Champions Tour events, with 209 top 10 finishes: in addition to the 45 wins, he has 43 runner-up finishes and 23 third place efforts, or 111 top three performances. His son, Steve, also played for the Buffs from 1994-97, and the two won the 2003 Father-Son Challenge. Inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1992, he is also very active in his own golf course design company.

At Colorado (1977-81): He set numerous school records during his CU career, in which he became the first and only player in school history to record four top 10 finishes in the conference championship meet (two thirds and two sevenths in four Big 8 title meets). A second-team All-American as a senior in 1980-81, when he had nine top 10 finishes and ten top 20 efforts, which are both still school bests. Over the course of his career, he had 19 top 10 and 26 top 20 finishes, both CU records, and was the top Buffalo scorer in 23 tournaments, tied for the second most in school history. He is the only player in Buff annals to lead the team in stroke average for four consecutive seasons, and one of just two to do it four times overall.

Professionally: He has over \$6.5 million in career earnings on the PGA Tour (he became the sports' 99th millionaire when he topped that figure), winning eight times, none bigger than his 1996 U.S. Open title. He captured that event on the last hole on Sunday, his pinnacle achievement that season which earned him the Tour's Comeback Player of the Year honor. His win in the 1997 Phoenix Open was landmark, as his 11-shot victory was accomplished by scoring the third lowest 72-hole score in PGA history at the time (a 26-under 258). He was the medalist in the 1986 Tour Qualifying School, finally making it to the big time on a permanent basis in 1987. He was inducted into the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame in 1997, CU's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2012 and into the state of Colorado Sports Hall of Fame in 2013. Unfortunately, he estimates he has lost a third of his professional career due to assorted injuries, but is healthy again and is now playing on the Champions Tour (with over \$300,000 in career earnings on that circuit).

STEVE JONES



At Colorado (1976-81): During his CU career, he played the second most rounds in school history when he teed it up for 18 holes 152 times. But in 1981, in his last Big 8 Conference championship meet, the three rounds he recorded there were most memorable as he ended a 14-year run by Oklahoma State golfers in claiming medalist honors with a 211 score. His 41 rounds during the 1976-77 season still stand as the most ever in a single year by a Colorado freshman. He earned honorable mention All-America honors as a senior in 1981.

TERRY KAHL



At Colorado (1991-94): He became the ninth (and to date, last) player to win back-to-back Big 7, Big 8 and/or 12 Conference medalist honors when he captured both the 1993 and 1994 Big 8 Championships. He joined Hale Irwin as the lone Buffaloes to accomplish the back-to-back feat. His 72.62 stroke average as a senior in 1993-94 was the best in CU history by a senior at the time; his 144 career rounds are tied for the third most by a Buff, with a career stroke average of 73.97. He is tied for the most top five finishes in CU history (11), ranks second in top 20 finishes with 25 and fourth in top 10 efforts with 14. A third-team All-American his junior season in 1993 and a second-team performer as a senior in '94, when he recorded a school record six top five finishes.

BOBBY KALINOWSKI



At Colorado (1990-93): He joined the Buff team after spending his freshman year at Phoenix Community College, and formed quite a CU trio with Scott Petersen and Bobby Kalinowski. As a junior in 1992, he won the PING-Arizona Intercollegiate in style, as he defeated Phil Mickelson on the first playoff hole; he was also the co-medalist at the '93 Air Force Falcon Invitational as a senior, making him one of eight players in school history to win multiple major tournaments. One of six players in school annals to record a 65 (or better) round in competition when he shot 31-34 in the 1990 Wyoming Invitational; the 31 on the front tied the second best single 9-hole score in Buff history as well. He owned a career stroke average of 74.98 with eight top 10 and 13 top 20 finishes in his Colorado career.

JONATHAN KAYE



Professionally: Now taking a break from playing on the PGA Tour (sidelined in 2010 with injuries), he has over \$10.5 million in earnings through 2012. He broke through for his first Tour win in 2003 when he won the Buick Classic in Harrison, N.Y., and won the FBR Open in 2004. He played on and off on the Tour, mainly due to a rotator cuff injury, but tied for second in the 1998 Qualifying School and had been a regular starting in 1999; that year at the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic, his 21-stroke improvement from round one to two (83-62) set the PGA Tour improvement mark. To date, he has made the cut in 193 of 318 events, with 66 top 25 finishes (31 top 10), with eight runner-up showings.

At Colorado (1972-73): He played just one season of golf, joining the team his senior year. He led the team in stroke average with a 74.00 norm for 16 rounds, posting three top 10 finishes which included a victory in the Galveston Island Intercollegiate, where he won with a 1-over par 289 score.

GEORGE KELLEY



After CU: He is the owner/general manager of Stevinson Ranch Golf Club (Stevinson, Calif.), and has played a key role in the tournament the Buffaloes hosted annually from 1999 through 2009 on one of California's top public courses. After graduating from CU in 1973, he played three years as a touring pro on the European, Asian and Australian tours. After his playing days, he became a real estate broker with an eye on golf, brokering several large scale golf course deals, and in the early 1990s, he set forth to build the highly acclaimed Stevinson Ranch on family owned land in central California. He is often a guest lecturer and is active in the National Golf Course Owners Association.

At Colorado (1986-89): His 73.65 career stroke average is the third best in CU history (it set the record at the time), the second best for a player with 100-plus rounds; his 71.15 stroke average the fall of his junior season still ranks as the best for the fall portion of a season at Colorado, while he is tied for the most wins (4) and top five finishes (11) in a CU career (he is second in top 10 efforts with 18 and fourth in top 20 finishes with 23). He set, and still owns, the Colorado records for low score for 36, 54 and 72 holes, all set during his junior season: a pair of 66s for a 132 at the Robertson Homes Invitational set the two round mark; a final round 72 in that meet for a 204 set the 54-hole standard; and his 284 score earlier that same fall in the New Mexico Tucker Invitational established the four round best. And for his career, he was the top Buffalo scorer in 23 tournaments, tied for the second most in school history. He was a second-team All-American as a senior in 1989 after being an honorable mention choice as a sophomore.

JOHN LINDBERG



At Colorado (2002-06): He tied for the third most rounds played in Colorado history, 144, including three GCAA Match Play Championship rounds. His career stroke average of 73.54 ranked third all-time for the Buffaloes, behind only one-time teammate Kane Webber (72.90) and Scott Petersen (74.37); it was the second best figure for 100-plus rounds other than Webber. He set the school record for low single round (63), as well as the most under par (-8) for 18 holes. By holding both the low gross score and most-under-par records for a single round, he became the first player to solely own both marks since Hale Irwin did so between 1967 and 1981. For his career, he had 13 top 10 tournament finishes, including a school record six straight during the course of his senior season, and 20 top 20 finishes. He was named CU's Male Athlete of the Year for all sports at the school's annual CUSPY (CU Sports Performers of the Year) Awards for 2005-06, when he also earned honorable mention All-America honors. He was two-time PING/GCAA All-Central Region selection and was just the second CU player to earn All-Big 12 and All-Big 12 Tournament Team honors in the same season when he did so as a senior.

EDWARD McGLASSON



At Colorado (1967-69): As a senior in 1968, he earned first-team All-America honors, the last CU player to do so. He was the No. 1 man on the Buffalo team that posted the school's best-ever finish at the NCAA Championships, as he led the Buff to an eighth-place tie in the meet at Las Cruces, N.M. He tied for eighth individually (70-72-75-74—291), to date the third best individual finish in the NCAA's by a University of Colorado golfer. He led the team in stroke average as a senior (73.80), when he finished second in the Big 8 Championships with a 212 score, falling to Oklahoma State's Grier Jones by two shots; however, he was one of three Buffs to finish in the top four in leading Colorado to the Big 8 title, its last conference crown to date.

BILL MUSSELMAN



At Colorado (1991-93): As a senior, he earned honorable mention All-America honors, when he was a second-team All-Big 8 performer. He led the team in stroke average both as a senior (73.5) and as a junior (73.4), one of only eight players in school history to do so for multiple seasons. He set a mark for the lowest CU career stroke average for 50 or more rounds with a 73.47 for 77 rounds, a mark that stood through 2003. His senior year, he won the John Burns Intercollegiate (Honolulu) and the Fresno State Lexus Classic, and he posted eight top 5, nine top 10 and 15 top 20 finishes in his career. An honorable mention All-American his senior year (1993). Prior to transferring back to the state where he starred as a prep (at Englewood's Cherry Creek High School), he lettered twice at the University of Tulsa in 1989 and 1990.

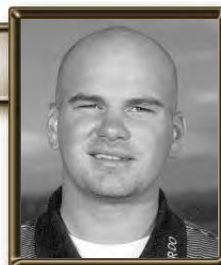
SCOTT PETERSEN



Professionally: A member of the Nationwide Tour since 2000, as well as in 1996; he played on the Canadian Tour from 1997-99. He has came up just short several times in his bid for his PGA Tour card, but has won over \$540,000 as a pro, including wins at the 1997 Infiniti Championship, the 1999 Samsung CPGA Championship and the 2000 Colorado Open.

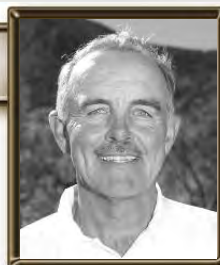
At Colorado (1997-2002): Playing as CU's No. 1 man over the course of his entire senior season, he completed his career with a 73.89 stroke average, fifth-best all-time at Colorado (at the time), with his 106 career rounds tying for the 13th most. As a senior, he led CU with a 72.46 average, the second best number in Colorado history at the time. His spring stroke average of 72.44 set a school record, and was the first Buff under 73 in the spring since Steve Jones did so in 1980. He became the fifth CU player to post a season stroke average under 73, putting him impressive company with Dale Douglass, Irwin, John Lindberg and Bobby Kalinowski. He also led the team in top 10 finishes (4), top 20 finishes (8), rounds in the 60s (5), subpar rounds (12), first round average (71.15), middle round average (72.79), final round average (73.50), and in rounds counting toward team scoring (38 of 39, or 97.4 percent). He tied for 33rd in the NCAA Championships (66-72-75-73—286), becoming the first Buff since Irwin to lead at any point of the finals after his 5-under par 66 in the first round. He won the 2002 sectional qualifier for the U.S. Open, shooting rounds of 68-67—135 and earned the right to play in the U.S. Open on the famous Bethpage Black course in Farmingdale, N.Y. (though he missed the cut). He turned professional immediately following the qualifier, and went out and won his first professional tournament (Green Mountain Open, Killington, Vt.) the following weekend, winning \$10,000 as a tune-up for the Open. After a two-year stint as CU's assistant coach, he is now the head pro at Sterling Country Club.

BEN PORTIE



At Colorado (1968-2005): Student, Athlete, Facilities Manager, Administrator, Assistant Coach, Head Coach. Simpson held all those roles over nearly four decades as a Buffalo, until cancer claimed him early at the age of 55 on December 5, 2005. He had a modest playing career at CU, earning three letters, but would make his mark as one of the top coaches in the collegiate game. On January 12, 2005, he was inducted into the Golf Coaches Association of America Hall of Fame. Simpson had replaced his own coach, the legendary Les Fowler, in January 1977, and would coach the Buffs for 29 years, the exact length Fowler had done so. He presided over 421 events as head coach, the fifth most for any sport in school history. He was most proud of the fact that 119 of the 129 players he brought into the program (92.2 percent) graduated with a degree from CU. He was the 1981 Big Eight Conference and NCAA District Five coach of the year, when CU finished second in the league and 11th in the nation. He was named the co-Big 12 Conference Coach of the Year in 2000, as his Buffaloes finished third in the league meet and were ranked in the nation's Top 25 for most of the year. He was also a finalist for induction into the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame in 2002, and in 2004, the organization recognized him for his contributions to the sport and honored him with its Lifetime Achievement Award. Simpson's teams went to the NCAA's 15 times in his tenure. Under his tutelage, Colorado produced seven different All-Americans who combined for 13 accolades (Jones, Tom Woodard, Terry Kahl, Rick Cramer, John Lindberg, Bobby Kalinowski and Kane Webber), in addition to 10 all-Big Eight and four all-Big 12 golfers and 15 All-America Scholars. He was also heavily involved in collegiate golf administration, and served two-and-a-half years as GCAA president (2000-2002) and spent a decade in different positions with the organization.

MARK SIMPSON



At Colorado (2005-09): He finished third in the most rounds played (151) at Colorado, and was 13th in career stroke average (74.19). He tied for second in both the most top 10 finishes (18) and top 20 efforts (26) in school history (he was 11th with five top five performances). He has had 89.8 percent of his career rounds count toward team scoring (132 of 147; does not include four solo rounds), a figure which ranked fifth in school history. He became just the fifth CU player to have qualified to play in four NCAA Championships, joining Rick Cramer (1979-82), Bob Kalinowski (1991-94), Matt Zions (1999-2002) and Kane Webber (2000-04). As a senior, he was selected as the Male Career Athletic Achievement Award winner for all sports, and the co-Male Athlete of the Year (with teammate Patrick Grady) at the school's annual CUSPY celebration (CU Sports Performers of the Year). An honorable mention All-American by Golfweek (one of 20) and the GCAA (one of 33), he also earned PING All-Central Region honors, All-Big 12 honors and All-Big 12 Tournament Team accolades. He finished as the No. 43 ranked player in the nation by both GolfStat and Golfweek. He became the 10th player in school history to win two career tournaments, claiming both in the fall semester, and in doing so set a school record for the lowest stroke average (71.00) for the fall in CU annals. He opened up his senior year by earning co-medalist honors in San Francisco's Olympic Club Intercollegiate, and three weeks later again snared co-medalist at New Mexico's Tucker Invitational. In-between, he placed second in DU's Ron Moore Invitational, posting his career best for the most under par in a tournament (205, -11). In the spring, he had four top 20 finishes, highlighted by a tie for second in the Western Intercollegiate (213, +3). He turned pro following his senior year and promptly went out and won the San Juan Open in his third tournament as a professional, and then captured the Colorado Open.

DEREK TOLAN



At Colorado (2000-04): A third third-team All-American as a senior, when he had three wins, six top 10 finishes (11 top 20) and a conference-runner-up 71.46 average that established a new CU single-season school record (just three strokes over par for the year). His first collegiate win came in the Western Intercollegiate (206, -4); three weeks later, he won again, claiming the Purdue Invitational (206, -10); and a month after that, he won The Maxwell in a playoff to become one of just 19 golfers for the year to win three or more times. His 71.35 stroke average in the spring decimated the previous record, and for the year, he led the team in 23 (of 24) statistical categories. He played the fifth most rounds in school history (144) on his way to a 72.90 career stroke average, which bested the old mark by over half a stroke. He also ranked fourth in top five finishes (10), fourth in top 10 efforts (15), first in top 20 finishes (27) and first in 54-hole tournament scores of 220 or better (29). At the 2004 CUSPY's (CU Sports Performers of the Year Awards banquet), he was selected as the Male Career Athletic Achievement Award recipient.

KANE WEBBER



Professionally: He is competing on the European and Asian tours and in several regional professional tournaments.

At Colorado (1974-77): Nicknamed the "Human 2-Iron" for his svelte 6-foot-3 frame, believed to be the first African-American to play varsity golf at Colorado. He led the Buffs in stroke average as a junior ('75-76) with a 76.27 figure for 30 rounds. He often played his best in the Big Eight Championships, tying for fifth as junior in 1976 and was sixth as a senior a year later, when he earned an individual berth in the NCAA Championships and was awarded honorable mention All-America honors. He became the sixth player in program history to twice be named first-team all-conference, garnering the nod in 1976 and 1977 and joining Keith Alexander, Dale Douglass, Hale Irwin, Larry McAtee and Jim English as two-time recipients.

TOM WOODARD



Professionally: He competed for two-and-a-half years on the PGA Tour after his collegiate days, and qualified for two U.S. Opens and a PGA Championship. He was twice selected as the Colorado PGA Section Player of the Year, won a national professional tournament in 1979 on the United Golfers Association Tour and still owns the low round at Denver's popular City Park Golf Course, an 11-under par 61 he shot in 1988. Since becoming a club professional in 1986, he has made an impact all around the Denver metro area: he served as head professional at City Park (1987-89), Littleton Golf Club (1990), South Suburban (1991-95) and at Buffalo Run (where he was the first head pro in 1996); he was director of golf for the City of Denver from 1997-2006 (overseeing six courses), and has been the general manager and director of golf at Foothills Park & Recreation District in Denver since 2006. He co-founded The First Tee of Denver, was inducted into the National Black Golfers Hall of Fame in 2012 and will be inducted into the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame this June.