

Ray Lajoie
NEW ENGLAND
PROFESSIONAL GOLFERS' ASSOCIATION
HALL OF FAME
2006

Ray Lajoie's fundamental nature is that of a generous, magnanimous spirit. His dedication to helping and serving others, his tremendous contributions to the game of golf and the New England Section PGA, his crusade to preserve caddie programs and his tireless work in fund raising for numerous charities and causes, is nothing short of legendary.

Lajoie spent forty seven years in dedicated service to the members of the prestigious Worcester Country Club in Worcester, Massachusetts. Worcester's head professional John Bernardi mentored Ray and helped him become an expert in tournament organization and fund raising. In 1970, Lajoie took the reins as head professional at the facility, a position he held for the next twenty seven years.

Lajoie had been elected to membership in the PGA of America in 1958, thus beginning a lifetime commitment to active participation in the Association. He served as NEPGA Vice President on the Executive Committee from 1979 to 1981. He coordinated the Assistants Association in 1980, while continuously mentoring sixteen of his own assistants to advance to head professional status. In 1986, Lajoie teamed with Ken Campbell to found the NEPGA Seniors' Association, first serving as its secretary-treasurer, then as president from 1989 to 1992. After initiating a fund raising tournament in 1986 to benefit a gravely ill fellow NEPGA professional, in 1988 Ray spearheaded the formation of the NEPGA Benevolent and Relief Fund. This special fund was established to provide financial assistance for NEPGA members in need. Through running an annual tournament fund raising event and soliciting donations, more than \$170,000 was raised for the fund.

While at Worcester Country Club, Lajoie founded the Ladies Nine Hole Association, began the first Junior Golf Program to train the youngest of golfers, aged two and up and, with the blessings of the club membership, spent countless hours working to preserve caddie programs all over the country. Ray's devoted wife Coco worked along side him and was his right arm throughout his career, as well as in their marriage. Together they organized the Lori Lajoie Tournament in honor of their daughter. The event benefited The Worcester Area Association for Retarded Citizens. The organization, which helps physically and mentally challenged children, has since been renamed The Seven Hills Foundation. The Lajoies raised more than \$2,900,000.00 for the charity during the thirty one years they hosted the event. In 1988, the NEPGA recognized Lajoie's expertise and accomplishments as an elite club professional by honoring him as the Section's Golf Professional of the Year.

Philanthropist extraordinaire, Ray Lajoie's integrity, outstanding character and devotion to serving others earned him the reputation as one of the most kind and benevolent New England Section PGA professionals of all time.