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2023 AWARD WINNERS: Michigan Golf Course Association Announces Honorees

LANSING – Jeff Hoag, owner and general manager at Scott Lake Golf & Practice Center in Comstock Park, and Carey Mitchelson, the director of operations at College Fields Golf Club in Okemos and executive director of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, headline the 2023 Award Winners announced today by the Michigan Golf Course Association (MGCA).

Kari Kahanec of Fox Hills Golf & Banquet Center in Plymouth, and Grandville-based Maple Hill Golf are also among the winners who will be honored and celebrated at the MGCA Awards Banquet on the evening of Tuesday, Nov. 28, during the 2023 Michigan Golf Business Conference and Vendor Fair at FireKeepers Casino Hotel in Battle Creek.

“We are excited to honor award winners that have built legacies and exemplified the spirit of servant leadership in the Michigan golf industry,” Jada Paisley, executive director of the MGCA said. “These award winners have left an indelible mark, not just through their successful businesses but by selflessly supporting their peers and the growth of the industry. It promises to be an unforgettable evening, dedicated to those who have truly made a difference.”

Jeff Hoag will be the recipient of the Matthews Lifetime Achievement Award. It is awarded to an individual or organization that over the span of a lifetime has provided steadfast leadership, outstanding service, and continuous commitment to the Michigan golf industry.

In 2023 Hoag celebrated his 50th year in the golf industry. Over the years he has expanded Scott Lake from an 18-hole facility to 33 holes of golf with a state-of-the-art practice facility.

His leadership and service to the Michigan golf industry includes 42 years as a member of the MGCA Board of Directors where he has served two terms as president and 16 years on the executive committee. In addition, he has been a member of the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) for 36 years, including serving as president, and he is currently serving as the national group’s treasurer.

“Known for his professionalism, business acumen and advocacy for the business of golf, Jeff is one of the most respected leaders in the national golf industry,” Paisley said. “He selflessly gives to others for the betterment of the golf industry and shares advice freely with anyone who approaches him. He has spent 50 years dedicating himself to the development and growth of Scott Lake Golf & Practice Center, his staff, and the community that surrounds the golf course.”

Carey Mitchelson will be the recipient of the Lyle Leeke Distinguished Service Award. It is presented to individuals who have displayed distinguished service to the MGCA and the golf industry in the state of Michigan.

Mitchelson is the director of operations at College Fields, an 18-hole public golf course in Okemos, and also serves the game of golf as the executive director of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation. He has been instrumental in helping create a successful new MGCA program.

“Carey played a very important role with developing our competencies for the MGCA Registered Apprenticeship/*Golf Course Maintenance Technician*,” Paisley said. “Using his knowledge from his day-to-day role as general manager at College Fields to develop the job learning competencies was a key part in having our program recognized and registered by the U.S. Department of Labor.”

Kari Kahanec will be the recipient of the John Dodge CARPE DIEM Award.

As the CARPE DIEM winner, Kahanec is being honored for being a team member of a MGCA member course who demonstrates creativity and success as defined by the legacy of the late John Dodge. She will receive a grant award from the MGCA Scott Family Educational Support Foundation.

Maple Hill Golf will be the recipient of the Dul Family Player Development Award.

As the Player Development Award winner, Maple Hill is honored as a MGCA member course that demonstrates creativity and success in growing the game by developing new golfers and new rounds and overcoming perceived barriers. Maple Hill will also receive a grant award from the Scott Family Educational Support Foundation to support continued golf programming for kids, women and beginners.

Also being honored on Nov. 28 at the MGCA Awards Banquet is Sundance at A-Ga-Ming Golf Resort, which the MGCA announced recently as the 2023 Michigan Golf Course of the Year winner.

Sundance, a Jerry Matthews design that opened in 2005, is one of two courses at the main campus of A-Ga-Ming and sits atop glacier-carved bluffs between Torch Lake and Grand Traverse Bay in Northern Michigan. The MGCA Course of the Year Award honors a member course that meets four criteria: Unique characteristics of the course; exceptional quality of ownership and management; outstanding contribution to its community; significant contribution to the game.

CONTACT: To join the celebration, call the MGCA by calling 800-860-8575 or visit michigangca.org to register. For additional information contact Jada Paisley, executive director, (517) 482-4312, jpaisley@michigangca.org.