



**1958**

ALUMNI SOCIETY

SPRING 2023



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Alex McPherson, '13, Matt Barrett, '16 and Billy Reube, '13

## Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Alumni Board, I am thrilled to share exciting news about the J. Wood Platt Caddie Scholarship Trust and our endeavor to expand our alumni network. As former caddies and scholars ourselves, we deeply appreciate the invaluable lessons and experiences that came with this unique role.

Now, as we have transitioned into the professional world, our passion to give back and magnify the impact of the Trust has grown stronger. We are actively organizing a series of engaging events throughout the year to foster connections among our alumni community. In November, we successfully hosted the inaugural young alumni happy hour at the Union League, and we have many more gatherings planned, including upcoming events at Whitmarsh Valley Country Club and beyond. These occasions will serve as reunions for old friends and caddies, providing opportunities for networking, camaraderie, and shared experiences.

By strengthening our network, our aim is to enhance the scholars' post-college journey and provide avenues for professional growth. Together, we can make a lasting difference in each other's lives while upholding the remarkable legacy of the J. Wood Platt Caddie Scholarship Trust.

Join us on this exciting journey of engagement and collaboration. Let's celebrate our shared experiences, forge lasting connections, and work together toward a brighter future for current and future caddie scholars.



Alex McPherson, '13  
JWP Alumni Board President



# FOREVER GRATEFUL

by Vince Walls, '72

From the outside looking in, most people view caddying as a summer job. A J. Wood Platt caddie knows it is an experience. It's an opportunity. We are given the opportunity to observe successful people. It's a learning experience. About the time we become comfortable with our skills, we realize these golfers have been taking the time to get to know us. Because they care about us. It gradually becomes a partnership – both on and off the course.

I was blessed to discover the joy of caddying at **Bala Golf Club** in 1966. After just two summers at the club, I felt as if both the membership and the club's management had become cheerleaders for my success and my education. Once I made the commitment to "show up" and displayed a willingness to be available all day, six days a week, I was welcomed and encouraged. I quickly began volunteering for any job the club needed done.

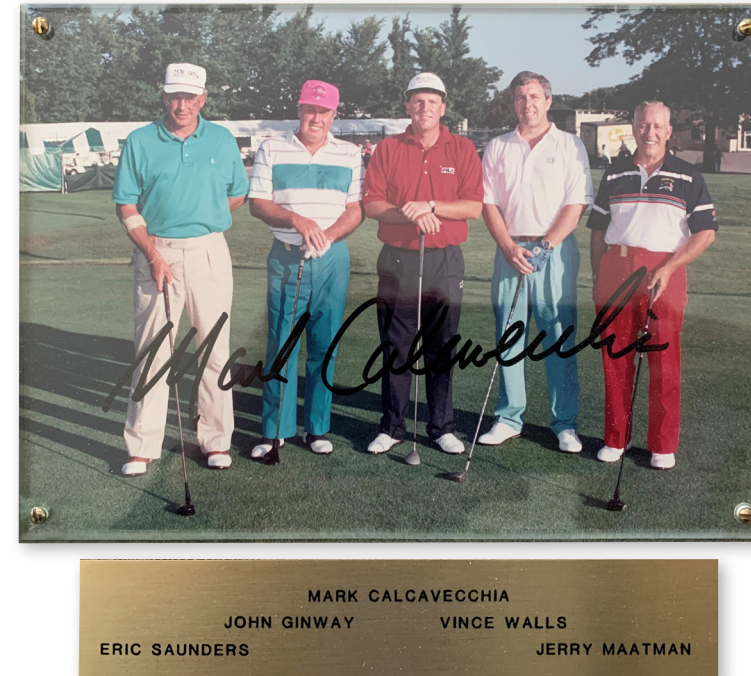
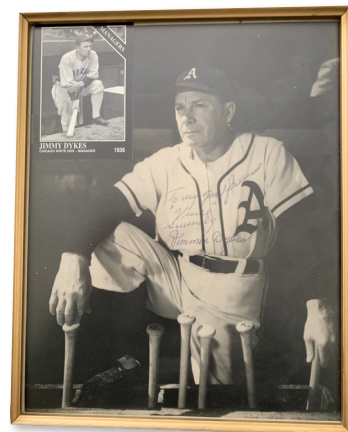
I began my freshman year at La Salle College in the fall of 1968. Over the next four years at La Salle and Bala Golf Club, I believe the professors and business professionals I was exposed to greatly influenced me and prepared me for life. I simultaneously participated in a superb education at La Salle combined with a masters degree in "life" complements of the talented, caring Bala community. It took me a few years to realize I had learned life lessons from superstars.

*While there are dozens of members and staff I could present as examples, permit me to mention just a few.*

## Howard Rexford

You could hear Mr. Rexford coming from a block away. While he was well aware of my name, as soon as he would spot me, he would boom out, "La Salle, how are you doing?" Not a semester went by without him demanding a review of my grades. Keep in mind when Mr. Rexford was only 19 years old, he caddied for **Bobby Jones** at Merion Golf Club as Bobby Jones completed his 1930 Grand Slam. As an avid golfer in his own right, "Rex" was club champion at Bala Golf Club three times and twice at Llanerch. He also drilled eight hole-in-ones.

One of his regular partners was the famous **Jimmy Dykes**. As a hugely successful baseball player with 2,256 hits over 20 years, he followed that up with a second act of 20 years as a major league manager with 1,406 victories. Talk about a couple of great bags to carry! I loved being present to hear all their personal stories. Just before my graduation in the spring of 1972, Mr. Dykes was kind enough to present me with a signed baseball photo from his heyday.



## Frank Chirkinian

*The "father of televised golf" for CBS*

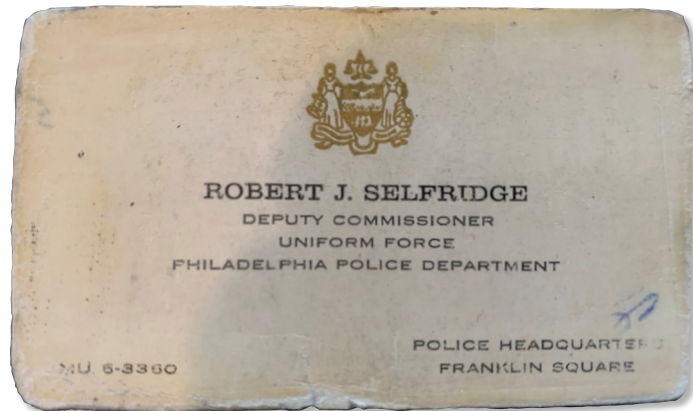
Nicknamed, "The Ayatollah" for his uncompromising approach while directing broadcasts- especially The Masters for over four decades. (rumor has it, that Frank loved this title). No doubt, Mr. Chirkinian was feared by many of the broadcasters, but he was extremely loyal to those who followed his vision to "perfect" the televised presentation of golf. He also highlighted the true beauty of Augusta National. And he introduced great focus on the leader board.

On a personal note, I was more than honored when Mr. Chirkinian would occasionally ask me if I was interested in "doing a Monday away game." What that meant was, meeting him at Bala Golf Club at 10 a.m. Monday, have his clubs put in his trunk, ride with him to the course and be prepared to carry his bag. I have special memories of the day we traveled to Squires Golf Club. It was a terrific afternoon because Mr. Chirkinian played great and I may have even helped a bit. For the record, Mr. Chirkinian always treated me and all his caddies like they were the most important person on the golf course.

As fate would have it, in 1991, I was fortunate to play in the Pro/Am for the Chick Evans Memorial in Chicago. As I was following our foursome pro, **Mark Calcavecchia**, down the 18th fairway, I noticed the famous CBS tower behind the green and I wondered...is there a chance Frank could be in the tower? Would he remember me? ...Hey, it's been 19 years! ...So, as we finished, I asked the official if I could check and see if Mr. Chirkinian was present. Upon reaching the top step, we made eye contact and Frank reached out his hand and shouted, "VINNY, how are you?" We chatted. Talked about family. (By now I'm happily married with four children and working in Chicago. And, in 1991, Frank is famous around the world!). And he remembered my name? What a special moment!

It's almost impossible to discuss golf and Frank Chirkinian without paying tribute to his best friend and right-hand man, **Chuck Will**. Mr. Will was also a Bala member. I remember him as a reserved, very kind gentleman. Not surprisingly, he was known for taking care of the tour caddies when they did not get a bag to carry at tournaments. He would have the network hire them as spotters for the tournament. Chuck Will was also good friend of J. Wood Platt and has an endowed scholarship in his name.





### Cardinal John Krol

Archbishop of Philadelphia from 1961 to 1988.

He was made a cardinal in 1967 by Pope Paul VI. The cardinal was granted an honorary membership to Bala Golf Club. And, the cardinal’s City Line Avenue residence was less than a mile away from the club’s 10th green. I can attest, Cardinal Krol thoroughly enjoyed his rounds of golf!

With all its celebrities as members and guests, Bala Golf Club was a very busy club in the late 60s and early 70s. But there was something relaxing about Sunday afternoons in the summer. Except for a few husband/ wife twosomes, the golf course was wide open.

Thanks to the confidence our Caddiemaster **Joe Dunn** displayed in me, I was honored to occasionally caddie for the Cardinal and his selected guest with their preferred Sunday afternoon tee times starting around 2:30.

Initially, I found the Cardinal to be reserved and rather quiet. But he slowly opened up and asked several questions about my family and La Salle. He was always a gentleman. His guest was usually a priest, but always a stick! (a low handicap golfer. the Cardinal’s handicap was between a 12 and 14.) And I’m pleased to report, the pace of play was always quick.

On our first round, the Cardinal had an unusual request. Upon finishing the 17th hole, he asked me if I was willing to permit them to replay 15, 16 and 17

again before playing the finishing hole. He repeated the request during our second outing. And by the third visit, I placed the bags on the side of the green toward the 15th tee box and said, “I’m sure we’re playing 21 holes today.”

I must assume the Cardinal eventually became more comfortable with me when he surprised me with an unusual question. He asked, “What do you think about Saturday evening masses?, which at the time, he had yet to approve in the Philadelphia archdiocese. I cautiously replied, “Being a business major, I know for a fact that you are losing a lot of parishioners who are playing golf on Saturday mornings, driving to the Jersey shore, and attending Saturday evening mass with their families. I think you may be missing a few collections.” He smiled.

How fortunate I was to have had these experiences! And, I can assure you, I am only scratching the surface of members who were exceptionally kind. **Sam Le Pera** was president of the club when he invited me to join Bala Golf Club, when I was just three years out of college. And, I can close my eyes and remember shagging balls with my baseball glove on the 10th fairway for our head pro **Henry McQuiston** (37 years as head pro of Bala) as he prepared for one of his many qualified appearances at the IVB Philadelphia Classic at Whitemarsh Valley Country Club. (1963 – 1980).

To this day, I cherish a business card signed by **Robert J. Selfridge**, Deputy Commissioner of the Uniform Force, Philadelphia Police Department. (I can’t believe how much Commissioner Selfridge looked exactly like Tom Selleck in “Blue Bloods” – especially in uniform). Commissioner Selfridge trusted me to use the card if I was ever stopped by an officer with ONE IMPORTANT CAVEAT – I had to be 100% SURE I was NOT guilty of any offense. Mr. Selfridge said the officer will ask you, “how do you know the Commissioner?” Feel free to reply, “that’s my uncle Bobby.” I presented his card once. It really worked. It was powerful!

Finally, as J Wood Platt graduates, we may have earned our Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees from the universities we attended, but we were tutored and given our “Bachelors of Life” degrees from the generous members of the clubs we were fortunate to caddie and work for. The great majority of those members truly cared about us and our futures. Speaking for all of us who are graduate caddies, we are forever grateful. And honored to pay it forward!

### The Epilogue, 50 Years Later

And yes, the journey continues. Last year, I celebrated the “Golden Anniversaries” of my graduation from La Salle University and the J. Wood Platt Scholarship program in 1972.

Looking back, when I recall that I bought my first few shares of stock with my paper boy earnings, it’s not surprising I spent most of my career in the securities business. And once again, much of my success was due to working with two great principled people. Both **Bob Dwyer**, the National Sales Director and **Jim Higgins**, the President of Dean Witter, proved to be the best the best two people I could have ever worked for. Not surprisingly, both gentlemen shared a great love for golf and always preferred caddies. Jim’s home



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course was Ridgewood Country Club, in Paramus, N.J. and Bob tees it up at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, New Jersey.

As a fortunate member of their “team” over the years, I served in several exciting positions, including National Sales Training Director in New York, branch manager of the firm’s flagship office in Chicago, President of a Dean Witter joint venture with Nations Bank in Charlotte, N.C. and Managing Director of the Financial Institutions group back in New York, just before our merger with Morgan Stanley in 1997. What an honor and privilege to be chosen and trusted to follow their consistent instructions to “do the right thing” for our clients.

Finally, and most important is my family. My wonderful, very supportive wife Susan and I have been married for 45 years. We have been blessed with four exceptional children and five adorable grandchildren – hopefully, with more to come!

Over the years I have done my best to promote and support the ongoing success of La Salle University and the J. Wood Platt Caddie Scholarship program. I remain forever grateful to both.





### Young Alumni Club

(open to senior Scholars and Alumni 5 years out – gift of any size)

- Alumni Bagtag
- GHIN and online score posting
- GAP Magazine
- Golf Digest subscription
- Invitation to JWP Alumni/Scholar Receptions
- Young Alumni listing in Impact Report
- Amateur Golf Society of America membership in partnership with Workhorse Brewing Co.

### Silver Alumni Contributor \$250

- Alumni Bagtag
- GHIN and online score posting
- GAP Magazine
- Golf Digest subscription
- Invitation to JWP Alumni/Scholar receptions
- JWP hat
- Society Member listing in Impact Report
- Amateur Golf Society of America membership

### Gold Alumni Contributor \$500

- All above, plus:
- Dozen JWP Titleist Pro V1 golf balls

### Platinum Alumni Contributor \$1,000

- All above, plus:
- JWP Alumni Blanket
- Invitation to JWP Holiday Brunch

### Lifetime Alumni Contributor \$10,000 (payable over 4 years)

- All above, plus:
- JWP Alumni Pewter Bag Tag
- Invitation to Annual Alumni Lifetime Dinner



## We're on the move!

25 young(ish) alumni gathered in November at the Union League Philadelphia for an evening of cocktail and caddie stories. We hope that you can join us for our next event at Whitemarsh Country Club (see details below).

Are you outside of the great Philadelphia Area and interested in hosting or attending a reception? Email Lindsay Myers, [lmeyers@gapgolf.org](mailto:lmeyers@gapgolf.org) to get started!

## JWP SPRING ALUMNI RECEPTION

### Whitemarsh Valley Country Club

815 Thomas Rd, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

Thursday, June 15 | 6:30 pm

Cocktails & Light Fare

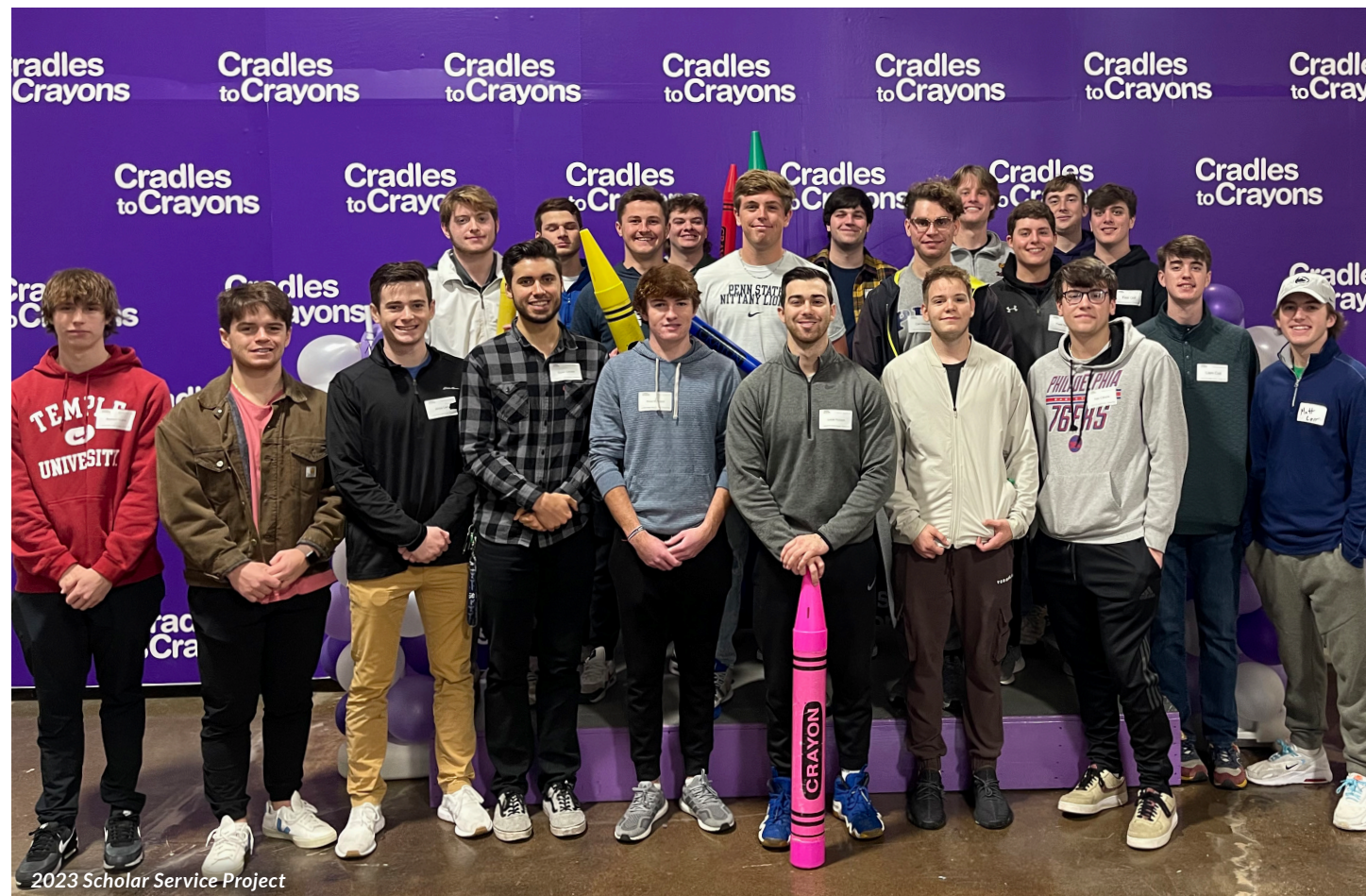
Visit [Plattsscholar.org/alumni](http://Plattsscholar.org/alumni) or connect via the QR code below to RSVP.





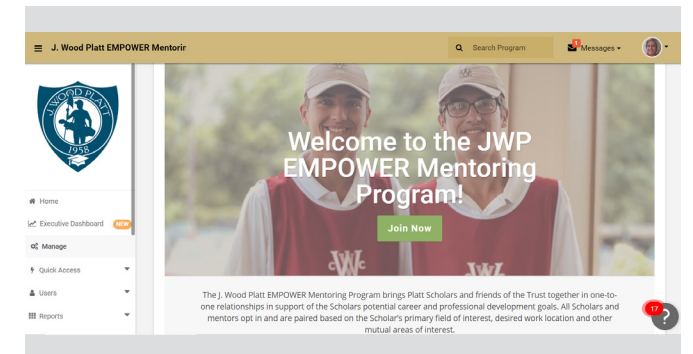
# EMPOWER

The **EMPOWER** program recognizes the unique ability of J. Wood Platt to make additional, meaningful contributions to our scholars' lives, beyond financial assistance. The program is here to support them in career development and community engagement in a variety of ways. Most importantly, **EMPOWER** provides access to the diverse network of Platt alumni and donors, an invaluable resource that can be leveraged during their academic and professional journeys.



## How can you get involved?

**Mentoring** We have an online platform to facilitate both longer and short-term connections with Scholars. Over half of our current mentors are alumni, and we would value your participation! Sign up today at [plattscholar.org](https://plattscholar.org) or visit the QR code below.



**Career Portal** We maintain an online list of full time job and internship opportunities for our Scholars. Please visit [Plattscholar.org](https://Plattscholar.org) for submissions or email [Lindsay Myers lmyers@gappgolf.org](mailto:Lmyers@gappgolf.org).

**Alumni/Scholar Events** As we expand the calendar of alumni events, watch for networking evenings that will include our junior and senior Scholars.



Mentoring Portal



Leadership Summit





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Broomall, PA 19008-3402

