The African American Woman Golfer
The African American Woman Golfer
Her Legacy

M. MIKELL JOHNSON

Foreword by
JoAnn Gregory-Overstreet
This attempt to record the historical identification and successes of African American women golfers is dedicated to the three most influential women in my life:

Mary Emma Shelton Mikell
Marian Moore Mikell Miller
Jamie M. Johnson Reid

Although this mission was not completed in time, each page of the manuscript is a memorial to Marian Moore Mikell Miller. Marian died on June 6, 2005, in East Orange, New Jersey. She will always be my one and only soul sister, who displayed the courage and discipline to be different, with grace and humility.

This project is also dedicated to Mrs. Winifred E. Stanford, the historian of the Wake Robin Golf Club. I will never forget you. You trusted me to tell the herstory of African American women golfers.
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I am truly honored to have been extended an invitation to write this foreword to what is so obviously a labor of love.

M. Mikell Johnson’s *The African American Woman Golfer: Her Legacy*, to my knowledge, represents the first complete body of work dedicated to the love of the game of golf exhibited by pioneering women of color.

The essence of her work is captured in two sentences in the chapter she aptly calls “Tee Time.” Sister Johnson states, “As with other individual and ‘high end society’ sports, golf has been an enigma among African Americans, especially women. Information and records seem to be dispersed or stored in little nooks and crannies.”

Ms. Johnson’s work, and those who provided encouragement and assistance to her efforts, are owed a debt of gratitude by all of us who have benefited directly or indirectly from the trailblazing efforts of others. Breaking down the barriers to full citizenship and participation, whatever the endeavor, unfortunately remains a feat of some doing in the United States of America, where we are still dealing with the issue of race in a less than enlightened manner in the third millennium.

Certainly, the participation by women of color in golf in an organized fashion, dating back as early as the third decade of the last century, is an exemplary feat. Further, it is a fine example of the march towards progress that must be undertaken by any and all pioneers exploring frontiers of adventure and progress.

On a personal note, it is a very humbling experience to have my mother, Ann Moore-Gregory, mentioned along with her pioneering contemporaries in the game of golf in this significant undertaking. The deep well of character Ann possessed allowed her to forgive the indignities she experienced on and off the links.
The stories she related about the competition and camaraderie those women shared remain to this day the source of some of my fondest remembrances of my mother and her friends. I cannot recall any instance where they ever expressed anger over what they had to endure just to play the game they so dearly loved. Indeed, golf’s delicate rituals allowed no room for vengeance.

The ladies chronicled in the pages to follow teed up during a difficult era, against odds that few of us will ever know. They endured painful slights with equal portions of courage and humor. In doing so, they cherished the game and honored it as well.

Further, I know the thought that what they were doing back then would someday motivate someone to look back on their achievements must have caused a warm smile to come over their faces.

Concluding, you have my deepest respect for the contribution your effort will make to the chronicling of Black life in America. Again, thank you for this honor. It is something that I will always cherish.

JoAnn Gregory-Overstreet
Las Vegas, Nevada
January 2005
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This project is accomplished with the support of a myriad of people who deemed that it is important to pay homage to the African American Woman golfer.

Ms. JoEllen El Bashir, Curator of Manuscripts, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, had the keys and opened the doors that provided documentation to the Wake Robin Golf Club and women in golf.

Dr. Elizabeth Brabble and Mrs. Winifred Stanford of the Wake Robin Golf Club guided me through the history of their club, various other women's clubs, and the United Golfers Association with documents and photographs.

Ms. Debert Cook, publisher of the *African American Golfer's Digest*, became the facilitator and was instrumental in giving this project the wings to soar above the clouds.

Mrs. JoAnn Gregory-Overstreet read the manuscript and consented to write the Foreword without hesitation.

The following authors piqued my interest in the history of African American women in golf: Marvin Dawkins, Pete McDaniel, Lenwood Robinson, Calvin Sinnette, and John Kennedy. Their research helped me to identify some of the women who have played a significant role in the history of golf among African Americans. Mr. McDaniel was of invaluable service in helping me to locate and verify valuable resources. I especially want to thank him for telling me the truth about where this project would end.

Also, all the editors of and contributors to the “Black History” references—annals, biographies, dictionaries, and encyclopedias—are to be thanked for their presentations of historical information as they saw it.

I began to wonder if I should have undertaken a project of this magnitude when responses were not received from some of the most influential and prominent
African American women and men gatekeepers of “Black Golf” in America. Their experiences and oral history would have been tantamount to discovering a mother lode of gold—but it was not to be.

However, the old African adage that begins with “it takes a village” was alive and well with the support of so many people across the United States who wanted herstory to be told: Mrs. Cynthia McCottry Smith of Charleston, South Carolina, shared her family history and treasures with me; Mrs. Rose Mary Spriggs of the Tee Divas Golf Club always responded immediately to my inquiries; Mrs. Judy Scates did not hesitate to share the history and photographs of the Vernondale and Vernoncrest Golf Clubs; Mrs. Carole Jamison was instrumental in providing photographs and information about the Chicago Women’s Golf Club.

I will never forget the following professional people who did not know me, but believed in my efforts and gave their assistance and valuable time: Mr. Dominick Davis, Periodicals and Documents, Francis Marion University, provided assistance with the initial manuscript; Ms. Deborah L. Yerkes, assistant documents librarian at the Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina, was able to retrieve legible images of the newspaper photographs and saved this project from ruination; Ms. Deborah H. Wright, reference archivist, Avery Research Center, Charleston, South Carolina, assisted in the retrieval of photographs of Althea Gibson; Ms. Vera Hooks, periodicals librarian, Fayetteville State University, helped with the African American newspapers microfilm retrieval; Mrs. Margaret Cox and Ms. Christina Stewart, librarians at the Florence County Library, searched the East Coast and mid-America for books, newspaper collections, and the many rolls of microfilm; Dr. Ruth Hodges, reference and information specialist and assistant professor at Miller F. Whittaker Library, South Carolina State University; Mr. William Billingsley, director of the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, provided some of the history of the Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame; Mr. Kevin Helms, the program director of the Michigan section of the PGA made sure that I was introduced to Renée Fluker, director of the Midnight Golf Program; Mr. Joe Louis Barrow, CEO of the First Tee Program, was most gracious in responding to my inquiries concerning the Joe Louis open tournaments; Mr. Marvin Hightower, CEO of BMX Enterprises, trusted in my concept and probably prayed for me each day as I stumbled toward the finish line; and the Duramed FUTURES Tour provided information on some of the players.

The following people were especially helpful in verifying important information for the manuscript and helping me to polish up the final presentation: Ms. Tiffany Jones, Ms. Nornette Graham, and the crew who kept track of all the disks and copies; Mr. Wayne Lynch, who took the time to help me save all the original
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There is something special about family members who respond to your frantic calls for help. You did not hesitate to give me your valuable time. I can only say that I love you for being there in my times of need. All of you were extremely indulgent and understanding of my quest to finish this project. You tolerated the absences and no-shows to allow me to do this without guilt.

And the last is my daughter, Jamie Michele. She asked the question: “Are there any famous African American women golfers? If so, where are they?” That was my cue to make an attempt to locate and pay homage to the famous—but lost—African American woman golfer.
Abbreviations

AAGHOF    African American Golfers Hall of Fame
AGA       Amateur Golf Association
CWGC      Chicago Women’s Golf Club
EGA       Eastern Golf Association
HBCUs     Historic Black Colleges and Universities
LPGA      Ladies Professional Golf Association
MAG       Minority Association of Golfers
NAACP      National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAAGHOF   National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
NBGHOF    National Black Golf Hall of Fame
PGA       Professional Golf Association
T & CP    Teaching and Club Professional
UGA       United Golfers Association
USGA      United States Golf Association
WNBA      Women’s National Basketball Association
WRGC      Wake Robin Golf Club
WSGA      Western States Golf Association
WSGAHOF   Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame
Much of the history of African Americans in golf has been chronicled in the male vernacular by male authors. This is to be expected since, in 1997, Tigermania became the index to raise awareness of the game to the general public. As with other individual and “high end society” sports, golf has been an enigma among African Americans, especially women. Information and records seem to be dispersed or stored in little nooks and crannies.

The African American woman has been shunted aside as a golfer because of the quest for the Holy Grail of acceptance by the male golfer for membership into the Professional Golf Association (PGA). As quiet as it is kept, in the past the woman often assumed the role of breadwinner in many families to lighten the burden of familial stress and responsibilities for men in the pursuit of the Grail. There was a partnership in seeking the dream. Although the African American woman did not play the game then, she did know about the game. Being a part of the support system also gave her opportunities to learn how to play the game.

A woman is usually introduced to sports by a male acquaintance or her father. The African American woman is no different. She begins to appear on the golf course, one by one, and is exposed to the game of golf. The man takes pleasure in showing her the nuances of the game. She is given a crash course by a friend or mimics her dad as he plays. She emerges from two socioeconomic lineages—the caddy golfers’ and the professional businessman golfers’— in other words doctors, lawyers. This woman begins to decipher the reasons why the man devotes so much time and money to play a game.

Also, there is curiosity as to why the man constantly uses so many terms of endearment like “baby, sweetie, or honey” when playing the game, terms that she has not been accorded in ages. The woman knows where the man is spending an
inordinate amount of time; she has become a golf widow. His mistress is looming on the fairways and greens. This is when the African American woman decides to learn this game so that she can compete with her arch rival—the golf course.

Many men have no problem teaching her something about the game. Even if some protest, it does not matter because the revolution has begun. Eventually, she is given much needed lessons in:

- How to hold all of the clubs, woods, and irons
- How to posture for a stance
- How to hit from the tee and the fairway
- How to hit out of the sand traps, the rough, and other penalty shots
- How to hit the ball straight, fade, or draw

She finds that the game is easier to observe than to play. The dilemma is whether a person can really tame a course, beat par, and challenge competitors at the same time. To find the answer, the woman is about to embark on a journey of many gains and few returns—actively playing the game of golf.

Gradually, the African American woman begins to discover the affinity that was luring the man to the game. She is developing skills that demand a mastery of accuracy and mental focus. There are the subtleties of putting the ball into the hole in one stroke, whether from a slope, under the hole, two feet or ninety feet. The game is still about the person's mental attitude and the golf course.

One by one she returns to repeat the drill. Day by day she shows up to look for another African American woman who is interested in the game. As fate would have it, a woman does show up on the same golf course. One by one, she becomes two. Then there are a few more, a group large enough to think about having a friendly competitive event. Gradually the woman is engaged in the game, as a casual player, when she is not part of the gallery of spectators. The casual games give the African American woman opportunities to practice her skills against real people. Soon, groups of African American women will compete against each other for the experience of getting out on the golf course.

The African American woman begins to share the secrets of the game with other players and starts to compete on an intramural basis for small prizes. These incentives are given out to reward the woman for her achievements and to entice more of her associates to participate in the game. These groups are not chartered clubs, but are considered the auxiliaries of male clubs.

Her associates come from many geographic areas to play in various competitive tournament venues. The African American woman is finally spoken of as a golfer. Although her status is that of an amateur, she is accorded invitations to play on the same course and in the same week as the male golfer. A title is coined,
flight levels are assigned, and a trophy is designed just for her. She is finally recog-
nized as an African American Woman Golfer by the United Golfers Association,¹
the Eastern Golf Association,² and the Western States Golf Association.³

I was asked, in 1975, if there were any famous African American women
golfers, and, if so, where were they? I only knew of Althea Gibson and Renee
Powell. They were the only two women who had qualified for Ladies Professional
Golf Association (LPGA) cards as professional golfers at that time. I ventured off
to the library to read up on the African American woman in golf and did not find
any definitive information. Thirty years have passed and, to my dismay, I have
had to go back in time to search for the answer to the question “Are there any
famous African American women golfers?”

The purpose of this endeavor is to examine the sport and document the exis-
tence of any African American women associated with golf on an amateur or pro-
fessional basis. The process should reveal the identity of the real, past, and present
women who are part of the history of golf that has not been told. The following
is a summary of what I found.

Note: all of the good (positive) scores in golf are named after birds—double
eagle, eagle, and birdie. The double eagle is the rarest score in golf. This is the
term I use to express the presence of the rare African American woman golfer. As
a rarity among the rare, she is the most unknown and silent athlete in the arena
of this sport. The African American woman is really an omission in the annals of
the history of golf in America.
Where Are You? Ethnic References

African American Reference Volumes—Content Analysis

The best way to search for basic information on African American women in golf is to examine the traditional ethnic references. *Ethnic* in this context means materials that have the words *Afro-American, Black American, Negro*, or *Negro American* in the title. Several of these encyclopedic sources have prominent African American academic editors of stature, such as Cornel West (Princeton), Lerone Bennett (*Ebony*), and Jessie Carney Smith (Fisk).

A content analysis was performed to evaluate twenty-six selected premiere almanac, biographic, dictionary, and encyclopedic type of references. Most of these sources contain a biographic summary of Althea Gibson as a tennis legend. However, there may be or may not be a casual mention that she played golf as a professional after retiring from the tennis circuit.

The reference sources are listed by title because the titles are more familiar to the general public than the name of the editor or author. These titles are reviewed in Table 1 in alphabetical order. Most of the information in these sources is repetitive and tedious, but each one has attempted to fulfill the goal of being a factual resource on the lives and contributions of African Americans. It is noted that these research tools provided a vast amount of information on team and individual sports such as boxing, track and field, and tennis. Limited information was provided on the social sports such as bowling and golf.

Since the task was to find an entry point that will direct one first to the sport of golf and secondly to the names and achievements of women in golf, the content of the references were analyzed as to

1. Purpose of the source
2. Golf entry/index term
3. Location of golf information
4. Amount of information on women golfers in comparison to men golfers
5. Golf history
6. Althea Gibson—golf career (mention or not)
7. Women’s golf organizations

African America: Portrait of a People (Estell, 1994)

The objective of this reference source is to illustrate the activities of nearly 400 years of Black American history and achievement through enlightening essays, biographies, photographs, and discussions of current issues.

The athletic information is summarized in the chapter Sports. The subsection Women in Sports indicates that one of the best-known Black heroines in sports is Althea Gibson. During the crisis years of the civil rights era, Gibson made her mark by winning

- A Grand Slam tennis tournament in 1956
- Two Wimbledon titles in 1957 and 1958
- Two U.S. Lawn Tennis Association national singles championships (the U.S. Open) in 1957 and 1958

Gibson was the first African American to gain top honors in professional tennis, and her performance paved the way for subsequent stars. There is no mention of her professional career in golf.

This text also states that American sporting history has been greatly enriched by the activities of talented Black women athletes. These women have achieved both fame and power from their athletic endeavors. The increased political clout of women has brought about changes in attitudes toward competitive sports.

African American Almanac (Lehman, 2003);
African American Almanac (Smith, 2000)

The 2000 Almanac was formerly the Negro Almanac. This reference work is a combination of biographies and statistics that span African American history. This volume makes an attempt to recognize golf as a legitimate sport under the section “Other Sports—Golf.” Golf is not listed as a main index term, but the Almanac does include biographies of the male golfers Lee Elders, Calvin Peete, and Charlie Sifford. The summary also includes a statement that “Renee Powell became the first African American female to be issued a Ladies Professional LPGA Golf Association card” (p. 1296).
The sports of track and field, skating, body building, tennis, basketball, and gymnastics are listed under the chapter Women in Sports Firsts, with the names of exemplary female athletes. The biography of Althea Gibson is indexed under tennis, but there is no mention of her golf career.

The index of the 2003 Almanac has the phrases “Golf and golfers, African American firsts, African American Women’s firsts, and Golf Championships, African American firsts” as entries. Renee Powell is still listed as the first to obtain a LPGA card.


This academic contribution is a biographical essay that celebrates the achievements of Black people working in diverse fields. The index term is “Golf Champions.”

In the biography of Althea Gibson titled Althea Gibson—Tennis Player, it is stated that she was a pioneer in a sport reserved for wealthy whites and often disparaged by Blacks as a “white sport.” Unlike the Black trailblazers in baseball and basketball, she had to overcome these two obstacles and break through the barriers of gender.

During the 1950s Althea Gibson became the number one–ranked female tennis player in the world. She was named the Female Athlete of the Year in 1957 and 1958. She was the first Black woman to appear on the cover of Sports Illustrated.

“After retiring from tennis, she took up professional golf and became the first Black woman to hold a Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) players card when she finished in the top 80 percent in three tournaments” (p. 209).

African American Encyclopedia (Williams, 2001)

The purpose of this revised edition is to satisfy an almost unquenchable demand for good reference materials on African Americans.

The index terms relevant to this search are “Sports—Golf” and “People by Profession—Golfer.” The summary under Sports—Golf states that it is speculated that if John Shippen had won the first U.S. Open in 1896, the history of African Americans in golf would have been different.

The desegregation of golf courses was the impetus for the formation of the United Golfers Association (UGA), organized by Robert H. Hawkins. After the battle of integrated public courses was won, the Professional Golf Association (PGA) still maintained a whites-only clause. This clause impeded the involvement of African American professional golfers until 1961.
There is a mention that two African American women—Althea Gibson and Renee Powell—played on the Ladies Professional Golf Association tour. Mini-biographies are included on Pete Brown, Lee Elder, Calvin Peete, Charlie Sifford, Jim Thorpe, Rose Harper Elder, and Renee Powell. The biographies of Althea Gibson and Tiger Woods are main entries. There is no mention of Gibson's professional golf career.

_African American Woman: A Biographical Dictionary (Salem, 1993)_

The _Dictionary_ attempts to address the need for accessible information about African American women and their contributions. It is felt that the need persists despite the increased visibility within contemporary American society as well as among the discipline of women’s studies.

Eight women are listed under “Sports” in the Appendix:

- Evelyn Ashford: Track & Field
- Valerie Briscoe-Hooks: Track & Field
- Gail Devers: Track & Field
- Althea Gibson: Tennis
- Florence Griffith Joyner: Track & Field
- Jackie Joyner-Kersee: Track & Field
- Wilma Rudolph: Track & Field
- Lucy Diggs Stowe: Tennis (1885–1937)

The biography of Althea Gibson is very informative and does mention her professional golf career. The last paragraph states that she began a career in public relations, working with a bakery firm, and started a career as a professional golfer. Regardless of what field she entered, she brought to it the same fierce energy that she did to tennis.

_The American Negro Reference Book (Davis, 1970)_

Davis claims that the “purpose of this reference work is to bring together in a single volume a reliable summary of current information on the main aspect of Negro life in America, and present this information in sufficient historical depth to provide the reader with a true perspective.” The book as a whole is designed to give the persevering reader a fully dimensional picture of the Negro within the context of past and present American Society.

The editor of the volume, John P. Davis, writes the chapter The Negro in American Sports. It is stated in the paragraph labeled “Golf” that as early as 1928 there were Negro-owned golf clubs in seven cities. The outstanding golfer of the...
day (1963) was Charles Sifford. Another prominent Negro golfer was Peter Brown of Los Angeles. Sifford was the first to win a PGA-sponsored tournament, and Brown was the second.

Althea Gibson is mentioned in the paragraph labeled “Tennis.” The story of segregation would have persisted in tennis if it had not been for Althea Gibson. Her gains in the sport are summarized, including her Wimbledon and U.S. Open championships.

**The Black American Reference Book (Smythe, 1976)**

Chapter 30, The Black American in Sports, is written by Edwin B. Henderson. He provides a very in-depth article titled Golf. He writes that shortly after golf was introduced to America in 1888, Black Americans began to play. Because of the expense of owning and maintaining golf courses, Blacks found it difficult to find playing sites. Some of the notable pioneers of golf include John Shippen, Robert Ball, Howard Wheeler, and John Dendy.

Lee Elder was the first Black to qualify for the Masters tournament in 1975. His appearance in Augusta brought to a close another tradition of Black exclusion from all-white tournaments. Pete Brown, Ray Botts, Chuck Thorpe, Charles and Curtis Sifford, and George Johnson were the few Black golfers who were able to play on the PGA tour in the seventies. The versatile Althea Gibson also proved her excellence on the links.

Mr. Henderson concludes that Black women athletes have paralleled the feats of their racial brothers in track and field, tennis, and golf.

Althea Gibson (Tennis) and Charlie Sifford (Golf) have been elected into the National Black Sports Hall of Fame.

The index term is “Golf, champion.”

**Black Firsts: 2000 Years of Extraordinary Achievements (Smith, 2000, 2003)**

*Black Firsts* represents a ground-breaking collection of the most significant firsts achieved by Blacks worldwide, with an emphasis on African American efforts. The editor indicates that they have also made a deliberate attempt not to overlook firsts by women. Here are some samples:

1926. The United Golfers Association held its first annual tournament.
1957. Charlie Sifford was the first Black to win a major professional golf tournament.
1967. Renee Powell became the first Black woman on the LPGA Tour.
1974. Lee Elder became the first Black to qualify for the Masters.
1991. At fifteen, Tiger Woods was the first Black and youngest person ever to
win the U.S. Junior Amateur Championship.
(Althea Gibson is not mentioned as the first woman to play on the LPGA
Tour.)

The subject of golf takes up four pages in *Black Firsts* (2003) and includes the
names of Marie Thompson and Ann Gregory. A subsection titled “The First Pro-
fessional Woman Golfer” indicates that Althea Gibson became the first Black
woman on the LPGA tour (p. 689).

**Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia.**

The 1993 reference records all of the first achievers in various sports under one
topic—Sports. The review states that it was not until the 1970s, with the passage
of Title IX and the female athletic scholarships, that Black women could be found
training with other women in athletic clubs and educational institutions.

There is a summary on Black women pioneers in the areas of tennis, basket-
ball, swimming, track and field, lacrosse, and volleyball. Althea Gibson is her-
alded as the Jackie Robinson of national female athletes. It was not until 1967
that the first Black woman, Renee Powell, joined the Ladies Professional Golf
Association. It lists Ann Gregory as the first African American woman to play in
an integrated 1956 Women's Amateur Championship (USGA).

The material on golf is written by Karen Jean Hurt in the 2005 edition. ¹ It is
a good summary of Black golf, covering the United Golfers Association, the Wake
Robin Golf Club, and the Chicago Women’s Golf Club. It also names various
women mentioned in the *Chicago Defender* newspaper. The article also explores
future female golfers who are now playing on the collegiate and junior golf circuits.
The biography of Althea Gibson is closed (1927–2003).

**Chronology of African-American History (Hornsby, 1991)**

The *Chronology* is designed to provide a convenient repository of important
facts relating to the cultural experience of African Americans in the United States.
Under “Sports, Blacks in” can be found the following:

April 8, 1975:
One of the last remaining barriers in professional sports fell as Lee Elder, a Black
golfer, began competition in the famed Masters Tournament at Augusta, GA. Elder
was invited to participate in the prestigious Masters after winning the Monsanto
Open in 1974. The Black golfer was officially welcomed to Georgia by the state’s
governor, George Buster. Elder was later disqualified in the preliminary rounds of the tournament,” p. 259. However, Elder was not truly disqualified; he missed the cut.

N. B.: Althea Gibson is not mentioned in the tennis section, but Arthur Ashe is.

Contemporary Black Biography (Pendergast, Sara and Tom, 2006)

This reference compendium consists of fifty-six volumes edited by a variety of persons. It provides informative biographical profiles of important and influential people of African heritage who form the international Black community: men and women who have changed today’s world and are shaping tomorrow’s.

The term “golf” is found under the Cumulative Subject Index. Short biographies are listed for Lee Elder, Fred James Jackson, Calvin Peete, Mitch Redmond, John Shippen, Charlie Sifford, Chris Webber, and Tiger Woods.

The only female associated with golf in the name index is Althea Gibson. Her biography is also found under the term “tennis” and is located in volumes 8 and 43. The heading of her biography reads “Althea Gibson, Professional tennis player, golfer, coach, and singer” and is closed (1927–2003).

The biography of Renee Powell is located in volume 34. She is listed in the subject index under the Professional Golf Association with the male golfers—Lee Elder, Charlie Sifford, and Tiger Woods. Under this category her biography can be easily overlooked.

The Ebony Handbook (Saunders, 1974)

The Handbook is a compilation of facts that speak for themselves, because the pattern of events and statistics supplied succeed in documenting the present-day status of the Black American and will be a useful reference for schools and colleges.

The Ebony Group attempts to squeeze the entire history of Black golfers into three paragraphs. The story begins with Lee Elder playing on the PGA Tour. Elder had ranked high enough on the official tour money list to be on the Ryder Cup team. Pete Brown is mentioned as a winner on the Tour, and Charlie Sifford is the pioneer who broke the color line. The other Black pro golfers mentioned are George Johnson and Charles Owens.

A biography of Althea Gibson is found under tennis, not golf. Gibson, who was the first Black to win the U.S. Open and Wimbledon tennis championships was named to the Tennis Hall of Fame in 1972. She retired from professional tennis in 1958. There is no mention of her career in golf.

The index terms are “Golf: PGA Tour” and “Golf: Masters.”
Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History (Salzman, 1996)

This research reference consists of five volumes compiled to remedy the lack of accurate, easily available information that will present the lives and significance of African Americans in the broadest way possible.

Four pages are committed to golf. There is a summary of the historical events of African American men golfers. It begins with John Shippen as a professional in the 1896 U.S. Open and continues to 1926, when Robert Hawkins organized the United Golfers Association (UGA). Harry Jackson and Marie Thompson won the first UGA Championship.


The segregation/integration issue between Black professional male golfers and the PGA from 1948 to 1961 is also discussed. Unlike the PGA, the LPGA, established in 1948, did not have a white-only clause, although it was implied. It was fifteen years later, in 1963, that African American tennis champion Althea Gibson competed on the LPGA tour. Renee Powell became a regular tour member four years later in 1967.

The Encyclopedia of Black America (Low, 1981, 1990)

The aim of the Encyclopedia is to produce a reliable and readable reference that represents the totality of the past and present life and culture of African Americans.

Golf, like tennis, was a segregated and elitist sport during the early years. The first Negro golf courses were at the Mapledalex course in Stowe, Massachusetts, the Asbury Park course in New Jersey, and the Sunset Hills course in Kankakee, Illinois. The earliest country clubs with nine-hole courses were Shady Rest Country Club in Westfield, New Jersey, and the Lincoln Country Club in Atlanta, Georgia.

The United Golfers Association was formed for men in 1926 and included women in 1930. Charlie Sifford was the first African American man to earn substantial money on the PGA tour in 1957. By 1967 he was ranked 25th among PGA money leaders. Lee Elder joined the PGA tour in 1967. He made golf history by becoming the first Black player ever to qualify for the Masters tournament. Althea Gibson has a main entry, and the focus of her biography is tennis.
These three volumes trace the development of African American athletes from their origin in Africa to the present. The athletic exploits are explored in a historical context. Golf is not discussed in Volume 1 (1916–1918), but Chapter V in the next two volumes is the designated golf chapter.

The golf chapter in Volume 2 (1919–1945) reviews the inroads made by Black males and the efforts of the United Golfers Association. Many tidbits of information are compacted into five pages, especially about women. Marie Thompson of Chicago won the inaugural UGA tournament. The Washington, D.C. all-women Wake Robin Golf Club was organized in 1937. The most prominent women players are identified as Laura Osgood, Lucy Williams, Marie Thompson, Ella Able, Melanie Moye, and Cleo Ball. It is also mentioned that Cora Lee McClinick was the winner of the first Tuskegee Intercollegiate Golf Tournament.

Chapter 5 in Volume 3 (since 1946) is expanded to twelve pages. There is a report on the historical struggles, with a note that the “LPGA, formed in 1948, also barred Blacks, though no specific racial clause was included in their constitution,” volume 3, p. 150. The most recognized women golfers were UGA Champions Thelma Cowan, Ann Gregory, Ethel Funches, and Renee Powell. Although many legendary women golf pioneers are mentioned, there is in-depth biographical coverage of LaRee Pearl Sugg from Petersburg, Virginia. Sugg is hailed as the “current one bright hope” as an African American professional golfer on the LPGA Tour.

Ashe also indicates that in 1967, Renee Powell was the first Black on the LPGA Tour and that she was joined for a time by the former tennis great Althea Gibson.

The biographical data on Althea Gibson is in the chapter titled Tennis. The chapter includes a statement about the retirement of Gibson from tennis and her involvement in activities such as golf, teaching, and coaching.

There are some photographs of golfers interspersed among the athletes of various other sports—Charlie Sifford, Lee Elder, Calvin Peete, Ann Gregory, Jim Thorpe, and LaRee Sugg.

At the end, the volume contains a reference section that highlights the achievements of individual and team champions in eight different sports. Under golf is a list of the United Golfers Association Open male and female champions from 1926 to 1984.2
Historical Statistics of Black America. Volume 2
(Media to Vital Statistics) (Smith, 1995)

The purpose of this endeavor is to provide a chronology of the conditions, status, and experiences of African Americans from the eighteenth century through 1975.

Chapter 18, Sports and Leisure, contains a modicum of information gleaned from the media, such as:

item # 2062 GOLF, Amateur sports
Black Golfers in a National Amateur Tournament, 1943

Eight Negro golfers . . . were all eliminated in the All-American Amateur Golf Championship at the Tam O’Shanter Country Club by nightfall of the second day, Tuesday, July 20, 1943. [The] high scores among the colored entrants [had] an 82 on the first and 80 on the second day, just 2 strokes over the qualifying score.”

item # 2087 GOLF, Professional sports
Black Golfers in a National Professional Tournament, 1943

No one of the thirteen Negro golfers who entered the $10,000 Tam O’Shanter Open Golf Tournament was able to finish for the money prizes. (p. 1880)

International Library of Afro-American Life and History: Historical Afro-American Biographies (Robinson, 1978)

This series of seven volumes gives a factual record of a people who were brought from Africa in chains and who today are struggling to cast off the last vestiges of their bonds. Achievements in sports are covered in the volume Historical Afro-American Biographies. The biographies in this volume are listed under the subject “Athletes” and then listed by professional activity.

The biography of Althea Gibson states that “Miss Gibson became program director of the North Vale Racquet Club in North Vale, NJ. A golfer as well, she is member of the Ladies Professional Golf Association and was named Women Athlete of the Year, 1957–1958.”

The term “Golf” is not an index entry for this series.

In addition to Gibson, the athletes Jim Brown, Wilton Chamberlain, Joe Louis, William Mays, Jesse Owens, Jackie Robinson, Ray Robinson, and Wilma Rudolph are reviewed.


The purpose of the Negro Almanac is to update the history, biographies, statistical tables, and graphs that cover nearly five hundred years of African American heritage. There is also information on Black firsts and descriptions of historic
landmarks. The volume attempts to give special attention to the Black woman. A new section has been added to detail her achievements and aspirations.

The chapter titled The Black Amateur and Professional Athlete contains a summary of the Black golfer. The summary begins with the PGA Tour circuit in the late 1960s when Lee Elder, Pete Brown, and Charlie Sifford were the big Black stars. The other male professional golfers mentioned are Calvin Peete and Jim Thorpe. The top woman of the decade was Ethel Funches.

The only mention of Althea Gibson reads “Althea Gibson, the former tennis great, tried golf for a while, but performed indifferently” (p. 949).

The index term for this volume is “Sports, Black” which then lists specific sports.

_**Notable Black American Women, Volume I/II (Smith, 1992, 1996)**_

The purpose of this research tool is to rewrite the general histories of Black American women and to acknowledge their accomplishments. The book attempts to fill a long-existing gap in reference sources as it chronicles the lives of five hundred African American women, living and dead.

The biographies are categorized in an occupational index. Under the term “Athlete,” the biographies include Alice Coachman, Mae Faggs, Zina Garrison, Althea Gibson, Nell Jackson, Florence Joyner, Jacqueline Joyner-Kersee, Wilma Rudolph, and Wyomia Tyus. Eight of the ten women are in track and field; only Garrison and Gibson are in tennis. There is not a single reference to golf as an occupation.

The biography of Althea Gibson is in Volume I, where it is mentioned that after a career in tennis, she became a professional golfer, playing in several tournaments from 1963 to 1967. The 1996 volume does not include index terms for golf or Renee Powell.


The purpose of this major effort is to chronicle the significant events, figures, and moments in the historical and contemporary lives of African Americans from 1492–1992 in a succinct, easily readable format.

1913—John Shippen finishes 4th in the U.S. Open, p. 213.
1938—The Tuskegee Institute sponsors the first intercollegiate golf tournament, p. 245.
1948—Golfers Bill Spiller, Ted Rhodes, and Madison Gunther sue the Professional Golf Association for racial discrimination. The suit is dropped when the whites-only policy is rescinded from their constitution, p. 261.
1956—Ann Gregory becomes the first Black American woman to play in an integrated Women’s Amateur Golf Championship (USGA), p. 272.
1967—Renee Powell is the first Black woman to join the Ladies Professional Golf Association tour, p. 301.
1974—Lee Elder becomes the first Black professional golfer to win the Monsanto Open in Pensacola, Florida, p. 323.
1975—Lee Elder becomes the first Black to play in the Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, Georgia, p. 325.

Who’s Who Among African Americans (Mallegg, 2006);
Who’s Who Among African Americans (Henderson, 2001);
Who’s Who Among African Americans (Phelps, 1996)

The purpose of these three companion editions is the same as the purpose of Who’s Who Among Black Americans—to present the achievements of over 20,000 men and women who have changed today’s world and are also shaping the world of tomorrow.

The Occupational Index has the keyword
Athletes: see Sports
Amateur
Professional
Semiprofessional
Not Elsewhere Classified
Coaching/Training
Managerial (2001 edition, p. 1079)

The name of a particular athlete has to be known to obtain his or her biographical data.

Again, biographies of African American female golfers are missing from the earlier editions (1967–1980). Even Renee Powell, the renowned LPGA professional golfer, golf instructor, and Clearview Golf Course Administrator, is not listed.

However, her father, William Powell, is listed under “Sports, Not Elsewhere Classified” as a sports executive and owner of the Clearview Golf Club:

Powell, William: Sports Executive
married: Marcella (deceased)
children: Renee, Lawrence
career: Clearview Golf Course, owner
8410 Lincoln St, East Canton, OH 44730-9443 (2001, p. 1076)

In the 2003–2006 editions, Renee Powell is listed as a golfer under Sports—Professional/Semiprofessional. There is no entry for Althea Gibson in the updated volumes.

The purpose of these editions is to present the achievements of over 20,000 men and women who have changed today’s world and are also shaping the world of tomorrow.

The Occupational Index has the keyword

Athletes: see Sports
Amateur
Professional
Semiprofessional
Not Elsewhere Classified
Coaching/Training

The name of the athlete has to be known to obtain the biographical data. African American female golfers are missing from this edition. Individual biographies are included on the male professional golfers Lee Elder, Calvin Peete, and Charlie Sifford. The biography of Althea Gibson chronicles only her tennis career.

Reference Sources Summary

Although the traditional ethnic references are quality reference tools, they all lacked substantial information about the historical or current contributions of the African American woman to the sport of golf.

A content analysis was conducted to evaluate twenty-six selected premiere almanac, biographic, dictionary, and encyclopedic references (see Table 1).

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<td>Hard Road To Glory (Since 1946)</td>
<td>Ashe, Arthur (1998)</td>
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<td>Historical Statistics of Black America (</td>
<td>Smith, Jessie C. (1995)</td>
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<td>and History: Historical Afro-American Biogra-</td>
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1. Access point
Twelve sources actually had an access point using the term “golf” in the index.
“Golf” is not a primary index term in some of the sources, but the names of male golfers can be found under the index terms “athlete” (must know name of athletes), “occupation” (must know name of athlete), “sport” (must know name of athlete and whether amateur or professional), and “sports—not elsewhere classified” (must know a lot).

2. Althea Gibson
Nineteen sources contained a biography of Althea Gibson, all indexed under “tennis.”
The test of the currency of the information is whether the biography states that she played golf as a professional after she retired from the tennis circuit. Ten of the reference sources did mention that Althea Gibson pursued a professional golf career.

3. First LPGA Professional
Four of the sources emphatically stated that Renee Powell was the first African American to play on the LPGA Tour. However, Althea Gibson earned her card in 1963 and played until 1971. Renee Powell did not join the Tour until 1967 and played until 1980.

4. Lee Elder

One source indicates that Lee Elder was disqualified when he played at the historic 1975 Masters Tournament. Lee Elder was not disqualified from the Tournament, though; he missed the cut. “To miss the cut” means that his two-day aggregate score was too high.

The reference of significance is *A Hard Road to Glory* (Ashe, 1998). This work is divided into three volumes—1916–1918, 1919–1945, and since 1946. Golf is a major chapter in volumes two and three. Chapter Five in Volume 2 pinpoints the impact of the United Golfers Association (UGA) on male aspirants in their efforts to compete. The preeminent UGA Amateur Women's Champion, Ann Gregory, is lauded as a pioneer. Good coverage is given to the Wake Robin Golf Club and the Chicago Women's Golf Club. In Volume 3 is found an added bonus—the Reference Section to the champions of eight sports.

Golf as a progressive sport in Black America emerges as one of the racially tainted separate-but-equal “microsports” when all of the reference data is analyzed. There are only bits and pieces of information even about the male golfers, but the coverage is good enough to evaluate their abilities in terms of golf history.

Therefore, any documented information about the African American woman golfer can be described as an isolated gem.

The identity of only a few women golfers could be found. Althea Gibson was in ten books, Renee Powell was in six books, and Ann Gregory was in four books. The names of the following women were found in one book: Ella Able, Cleo Ball, Paris Brown, Thelma Cowans, Ethel Funches, Melanie Moye, Laura Osgood, LaRee Sugg, and Lucy Williams.

This does not provide much credence to the gatekeepers of *herstory* in the game of golf.
The Clubhouse: Ethnic Golf Books

Content Analysis

If teams of African American academic researchers cannot get the story of African American women golfers right, why should one expect any individual author to tackle the problem with fairness, equality, or justice? However, there are several books dedicated to providing information on the historical trials and tribulations of African American men in the sport of golf. Their authors attempt to correct the myth that women golfers of talent did not exist, do not exist, and will not exist.

Unlike the research reference editors, these authors make a concerted effort to integrate the identity of women with their contributions and achievements into the totality of the African American golf experience. Although the information they provide may be compressed into a chapter or limited textual space, there is a focus on the impact of the African American woman on the history of golf in the United States.

The books that presented the most researched and factual information are


*Skins & Grins: The Plight of the Black American Golfer (Robinson, 1997)*

This book covers Black golf history from a Chicago, Midwestern perspective. The author reviews the struggles of golf pioneers and directs attention to the junior
programs that are available to future Black golfers. The book is the first to provide in-depth information on the Chicago Women’s Golf Club. Its excellent coverage includes the name of each president and the achievements during her tenure. It also provides a good biography of Ann Gregory, the first African American woman to play in a United States Golf Association (USGA) tournament as an amateur.

One of the most interesting areas of this book is the information presented on the three golf Halls of Fame located throughout the country:

- National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame (A. Robinson; est. 1959)
- National Black Golf Hall of Fame (H. Dunovant; est. 1986)
- Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame (F. Horton; est. 1975)

Their collective mission is to establish memorials to honor the revered memories of the men and women who have championed the positive attributes of golf in the Black community.1

The National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame was established in 1959 by Mrs. Anna Mae Robinson of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club. She petitioned the officers and membership of the United Golfers Association (UGA) for many years before they sanctioned the project. The purpose of the Hall of Fame was to honor the outstanding players and exceptional contributors to the Association.

Seventeen women were inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame from 1961 to 1991.

The National Black Golf Hall of Fame was established in 1986 by Harold Dunovant. The National Black Golf Hall of Fame recognizes the contributions of any golfer, regardless of ethnicity, who promotes the game within the African American community. No women were inducted into this Hall of Fame between 1986 and 1991. The first woman was inducted in 1994.

The Western States Golf Association (WSGA) Hall of Fame was established in 1975 by Fred Horton III. Induction into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame is predicated on the outstanding contributions that a member has made within the Association. Eight women inductees were recognized for their contributions to WSGA from 1979 to 1991.

*Uneven Lies: The Heroic Story of African Americans in Golf*  
*(McDaniel, 2000)*

The hardships of African American male golfers trying to beat the odds are colorfully presented in this book. Biographies of John Shippen, Bill Spiller, and the historical giants of the game are well documented. The book contains many rare and priceless pictures. The book is a golf photo gallery.
Other gems are located in Chapter 6, Soulmates and Sole Survivors. This chapter consists of sixteen pages of female golf history. It is introduced with a full-page picture of Althea Gibson shown in a golf swing pose. The text begins with LaRee Pearl Sugg describing her experiences with the UCLA golf team at the 1991 NCAA National Championship. Sugg sank the putt that won her school the championship and the trophy.

Sandwiched in the pages of this chapter are accounts of the exploratory journeys of African American women who “displayed amazing strengths and resilience in the face of discrimination on both the political and social fronts in this country” (chapter 6, p. 70). The movers and shakers were the Wake Robin Golf Club and the Chicago Women’s Golf Club. The golf enthusiasts and multiple UGA Championship winners were

- Ella Able
- Julia Towns Siler
- Thelma Cowan
- Marie Thompson
- Ethel Funches
- Lucy Williams
- Melnee Moye
- Geneva Wilson

Excellent biographies are included on Ann Gregory, the consummate amateur golfer, and Althea Gibson as a golf competitor. There are very detailed descriptions of Gregory’s first USGA Women’s Amateur competition at Meridian Hills Country Club in Indianapolis in 1956. Gibson chartered her waters on the LPGA Tour. She was born a competitor in all of her endeavors. Gibson played in 171 LPGA events from 1963 to 1977.

Additional material is included on some of the golf administrators and instructors, exemplified by

- Paris Brown—UGA Tournament Director
- Barbara Douglas—USGA Golf Administrator and CEO of the National Minority Golf Foundation
- Maggie Hathaway—Golf activist and journalist
- Phyllis Meekins—LPGA Golf Instructor
- Renee Powell—Clearview Golf Course Administrator

The chapter ends with LaRee Sugg lamenting that there was a tremendous time gap between her and Renee Powell. She says she does not foresee many coming after her on the LPGA Tour.
Forbidden Fairways: African Americans and the Game of Golf (Sinnette, 1998)

Not only does this author review the history of Black golf, but he also provides glimpses into the lives of the athletes who made golf a career in spite of all obstacles. He includes a surprising number of bios. The male biographies profile twenty-four men who were the pioneers, the support troops, the celebrities, and the ones who broke through:

John Bartholomew  Moss Kendrix  Jackie Robinson
Dewey Brown  Joe Louis  John Shippen
Pete Brown  Ray Mitchell  Charlie Siford
Jim Dent  Walter Morgan  Walter Speedy
Billy Eckstine  Charles Owen  Bill Spiller
Lee Elder  Calvin Peete  Bobby Stroble
George Grant  William Powell  Jim Thorpe
Earl Jackson  Teddy Rhodes  Howard Wheeler

Chapter 7, The Struggle Within A Struggle, deals with the historical progress of African American women in the game of golf from 1920 to 1998. The United Golfers Association was the parent of African American women’s golf, with the Wake Robin Golf Club and the Chicago Women’s Golf Club as its volatile offspring. These two women’s clubs gave the sustenance and solid support necessary for progressive change. These women became politically involved, exerting their power to integrate golf facilities in their areas. The Wake Robin Golf Club was instrumental in the creation of the 9-hole Langston Golf Course for Blacks. Today, the course is an 18-hole facility located on Bennington Road in Washington, D.C. The Chicago Women’s Golf Club was the first African American golf organization, male or female, to organize and sponsor a junior golf program.

In addition to the historical information packed into this book, there are also excellent biographies of eight exceptional women:

- Ann Gregory—UGA most prolific female golf champion
- Paris Brown—UGA first Tournament Director
- Ethel Funches—UGA Open Champion five times
- Althea Gibson—First to play LPGA Tour
- Maggie Hathaway—Golf activist/journalist
- Phyllis Meekins—LPGA Golf Instructor
- Renee Powell—Second to play LPGA Tour
- LaRee Sugg—Third to play LPGA Tour
African American Golfers During the Jim Crow Era
(Dawkins and Kinloch, 2000)

Dawkins and Kinloch delve into the historical aspects of the game with an East Coast perspective. The golf experiences are reviewed with an eye to tournament participation, from the effects of social elitism to exposure in the press and the golfer’s self-perception. The historical point of view begins with John Shippen and continues to the progress of the sixties. Chapter 4 is devoted to Robert H. Hawkins and the development of the United Golfers Association. The support of Joe Louis as the Black golf ambassador is chronicled in Chapter 5.

African American female contributions are dispersed throughout the text, which mentions such names as Lucy Williams (Mitchum), Julia Siler, Theresa Howell, Eoline Thornton, Ann Gregory, Thelma Cowans, Cleo Ball, Thelma Hawthorne, Cora Lee McClinick, Helen Webb Harris, Ethel Williams, Adelaide Adams, Paris Brown, Marie Thompson, Laura Osgood, Ella Able, Melnee Moye, Ethel Funches, Geneva Wilson, Vivian Pitts, Alice Stewart, and Sarah Smith.

The most important documentation in this book consists of three tables listing the female golf participants, their scores, and the tournaments they won. The data on the National United Golfers Association Tournament winners (Table 4.2, p. 41) lists the year and location of each tournament and the names of the Amateur Men, Amateur Women, and Professional Open Champions from 1926 to 1962.2

A Course of Their Own: A History of African American Golfers
(Kennedy, 2000)

Kennedy delves deeply into the careers, grievances, sorrows, and rewards of the African American male golfer. He begins with an introduction to Bill Spiller in Oklahoma. Then he ventures to the South, where the caddies Pete Brown, Charlie Sifford, Teddy Rhodes, and Lee Elder began to make moves toward careers in golf. Finally, the text focuses on golf pioneer John Shippen and describes the success of the former caddies.

It also provides historical information about the United Golfers Association, which was organized in 1926 to provide a variety of competitions between Black golf clubs throughout the country. Several tournaments were played during the year. The premiere event was the UGA Open Championship. These events were held in many cities, from the East to the West Coast. The events always provided a curative outlet, especially for the men, since the PGA had a “white only” clause.

Mini-biographies are interspersed throughout the book, covering pioneers such as Howard “Butch” Wheeler, who shot low scores of 62 in various tournaments, and Bill Wright, the first Black man to win a major USGA National Public Links...
Championship. The book also describes the lives of golfers from the caddy days, the hustling days, the UGA days, the lawsuit days, and the PGA days, including

James Black  Calvin Pete
Pete Brown  Ted Rhodes
Jim Dent  Charlie Sifford
Harold Dunovant  Bill Spiller
Lee Elder  Jim Thorpe
James Walker

Only a modicum of information is included on the women golfers Maggie Hathaway and Rose Elder. The activities of Maggie Hathaway, the female golf activist, are interwoven throughout the text. Biographical information centers around her arrival in Los Angeles to become an actress to her appointed role as a Black golf activist. She became aware of golf management and was a constant thorn in their sides. She lobbied for Black golfers to play in white tournaments and picketed golf courses to integrate the tournaments. Hathaway confronted the PGA about Gary Player of South Africa having PGA membership and privileges when Black golfers could not play in their own country. Maggie Hathaway founded the Beverly Hills–Hollywood NAACP and created the Image Awards.

Rose Lorraine Harper Elder, who was an excellent golfer, is mentioned only in relation to her former husband Lee Elder. Much information is given about her management skills and how she was able to help him on his road to the 1975 Masters Tournament. The last chapter, “You Are the Ones,” contains the statement that “on the whole, young African Americans were unaware of the Black men and women, such as the UGA great Ann Gregory and LPGA pioneers Renee Powell and Althea Gibson, who had an impact on the game.”

Summary

The contents of five books were analyzed. The main theme of all of the books was the advent and impact of the United Golfers Association. Second, each book focused on the trials and tribulations of the African American male in his attempt to create a positive image in the world of golf. Third, each book tried to illustrate the importance of the women supporting the men in their endeavors, as well as carving out a space for themselves. Finally, each book summarized the failures, applauded the wannabes, and glorified Tiger Woods as the beneficiary of all that is good about the game of golf.

African American golf history from a Chicago, Midwestern perspective is covered in *Skins & Grins* by Robinson (1997). He reviews the struggles of the male pioneers, identifies some of the junior golf programs, and provides in-depth information
about the Chicago Women’s Golf Club. He also chronicles the importance of the three African American golf Halls of Fame, describing the purpose of each and listing the names of the inductees.

McDaniel (2000) colorfully presents the hardships of African American male golfers trying to beat the system in Uneven Lies. Chapter 6, Soulmates and Soul Survivors, comprehensively describes the attributes of the African American woman in golf. The chapter contains many details about some of the most prominent female players on the United Golf Association tour. There is good biographical coverage of Althea Gibson as a golfer and of Ann Gregory. The book is laced with photographs of many male and female golfers.

Sinnette (1998) deals with the historical progress of women in the game of golf from 1920 to 1998, primarily in Chapter 7, The Struggle Within A Struggle, of Forbidden Fairways. The United Golfers Association is the guiding force, with the Wake Robin Golf Club and the Chicago Women’s Golf Club acting as support groups. The book includes excellent biographies of several women, such as Ann Gregory, Paris Brown, Ethel Funches, and Renee Powell.

African American Golfers During the Jim Crow Era (Dawkins and Kinloch, 2000) describes the historical aspects of the game as experienced by both male and female golfers. The contributions of women are not in a definitive chapter, but ample attention is given to them throughout the text. The names of the leading United Golfers Association Open women’s champions are tabulated from 1930 to 1962.

A Course of Their Own by Kennedy (2000) describes the sorrows and heartaches of the individual African American male golfers in their attempts to break the PGA “color clause.” You can feel the pain inflicted on their lives, health, and families as these men strove to seek equality in a game that they loved.

Many antics and plaudits are attributed to Maggie Hathaway. She is given credit as the civil rights activist for golfers and as a sports writer for the L. A. Sentinel newspaper. Rose Harper Elder, a former golfer on the United Golfers Association tour, is acknowledged as the first wife to travel and manage the career of her husband. Tributes are also accorded to Ann Gregory, Renee Powell, and Althea Gibson.

The combination of the books provides a more detailed historical portrait of the African American woman golfer, which is not found in the ethnic reference volumes. The books also contain comprehensive biographies on many of the women golf legends.

Dawkins and Kinloch (2000) lists the names of the golfers who won the United Golf Association Opens from 1926 to 1962. Their data includes the names of male and female amateur winners, male professional winners, the golf course, and the location.
Content Analysis

Two of the most influential newspapers in Black America—the *Afro-American* and the *Chicago Defender*—were reviewed for media coverage of the woman golfer. The *Afro-American* was chosen to obtain information about the activities of the Wake Robin Golf Club. The *Chicago Defender* was selected to monitor the activities of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club.

The sports pages were examined to collect information on the tournaments, players, flight rankings, and scores. A summary of the data identified the quality of the playing field and documented the progressive emergence of the African American woman golfer as an athlete.

The retrospective time frame is over seventy years, from 1930 to 2005. Microfilm versions of the papers were scanned during the golf season—June to September. This is an important time period to examine because it reveals the identity of the pioneers. In addition, there is an anticipation that the two papers will yield photographs of many women golfers, especially the champions of the playing fields. Then there will be no denial of the existence of the African American woman golfer.

The parameters looked for are

- Tournament dates announcements
- Women winners, second place, third place, and the rest of field
- Photographs of women golfers only

*The Afro-American, 1930–2005*

John H. Murphy published the first issue of the *Afro-American* newspaper in the Baltimore area in 1892.
The *Afro-American* is published once a week as a Saturday paper. Each issue contains national, state, and local news; societal events; geographical analyses of the East Coast; and sports news. The sports pages are collectively designated “Afro Sports” and are usually located between pages 18 and page 23 of the issue. The golf tidbits can be found in various areas within these pages. Only one golf-specific column appears as an intermittent regular: “Golf—by Nat Rayburg.”

The first mention of the Wake Robin Golf Club is in the Club section on page 7 of the May 22, 1937, issue. On page 17 of the June 1937 issue is a photograph of a Wake Robin Golf Club member, Jerenia Reid, with the caption “Golf for Women.”

There is widespread coverage of golf tournaments sponsored by the Eastern Golf Association, the United Golf Association, and the local clubs of Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. The paper also documents the problems that the Wake Robin Golf Club encountered during its formative years of 1937 to 1945. The following news copy describes how the Wake Robin Golf Club women struggled to survive in spite of the prejudicial acts plaguing them. The following examples chronicle the turmoil:

Copy # 1—“Six Cops Guard Golfers.” “3 Players Break Jim Crow Rule.”
July 5, 1941, 1 & 2.
J. Asa Williams, president of the Royal Golf Club, and two other golfers refused to leave the East Potomac Public Golf Course after they were told that they were barred from the Course because they were “colored Americans.”

Copy # 2—“White Haters Curse, Stone D C Golfers.”
August 1, 1942, 24.
Wake Robin Club members Helen Harris, Bonita Harvey, Francis Watkins, and Kelly Snowden were attacked on the third Green of the Anacostia Fairlawn Course, in Washington, D.C. The foursome was stoned by a crowd. Even some white soldiers shouted the racial slurs of “send them on down to Georgia and they will be cared for the right way down there.”

Copy # 3—“War Causes Cancellation of Golf Meet.”
August 8, 1942, 23.
Dr. George Adams, president of the United Golfers Association, and Mrs. Paris Brown, President of the Wake Robin Golf Club, announced that the upcoming UGA Open Tournament in August would be cancelled. The cancellation of the tournaments appears to have brought all of the turmoil and frustration of the Club to an end. Although the Wake Robin Golf Club had difficulties with racial inequities, there is also positive news coverage of tournaments in which individual members are featured, such as

Ethel Terrell—1st, 1939 EGA Open Championship
Coverage of the Wake Robin Golf Club is scarce on the sports pages, except for the mention of a member’s status in the playing field. This could be due to the fact that *The Afro-American* has a Club Page and a Women's Section in the same issue and the news is not duplicated on the sports pages. Second, *The Afro-American*, Baltimore edition, is the primary source for this research and the material may have been localized in the Washington edition.

**The Chicago Defender, 1930–2005**

The *Chicago Defender* newspaper was founded by Robert S. Abbott in 1905. The location of the sports pages of the *Defender* tends to vary and depends on the volume of news and advertisements. The golf specifics are found under several columns; “Watching the Scoreboard” appears in 1937. The second column, “Down the Fairway by Tee Shot,” appears in 1954. By 1965, a new golf column appears called “Golfing by Alex Morrison.” The first two golf-specific columns contain tournament news and photographs of players. The column by Morrison is in a how-to-play tip format with a picture of a Caucasian male or female golf pro demonstrating a grip or swing. The overall golf coverage is confined to the clubs located in Midwest states, such as Michigan, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Oklahoma, plus the states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, and as far west as California.

The *Defender* extends good coverage to the woman golfer, especially after the Chicago Women’s Golf Club begins to host the United Golfers Association’s major tournaments in the area.

The additional interest of the *Defender* in golf is evident because the paper established “The *Chicago Defender* Three-Legged Trophy” for winners of the Annual United Golfers Association National Amateur Championships. Ann Gregory won a trophy in 1956 by winning the last leg at the Chicago Women’s Club’s Annual two-day tournament at the Pipe O’Peace Golf Club. A winner of three legs (tournaments) becomes a permanent keeper of the trophy.²

The paper is also generous in its coverage of any Chicago Women’s Golf Club–sponsored tournaments. The Club associated itself with tournaments where prominent male golfers would participate. After the death of Walter Speedy, the Chicago Women’s Golf Club renamed their annual tournament the Walter Speedy Memorial Tournament. Now the Club hosts three tournaments in the area—the UGA National Open, the Midwest Open, and the CWGC/Walter Speedy Memorial. This symbiotic relationship gives the Club...
and its members national media exposure. This public relations coup entices many women golfers to join the Club and participate in local events to showcase their talents.³

**Summary**

The *Afro-American* and the *Chicago Defender* verify that information on the African American woman golfer is missing from the history of the sport. These papers give extensive information about the tournaments, the playing field, and the scoring results. Sometimes the story lines on the women are miniscule in comparison to the hole-by-hole descriptions accorded to the men, even in the UGA National Open reports.

Although the scoring results of the women are secondary to the male heroics, the two papers do extend little courtesies to the women. These extras include referring to all of the contestants as Mrs. or Mesdames, even if the woman is single. Often the description is “the wife of,” “the housewife in,” “lives in,” “clerk at,” or “a member of.” There are errors in the spelling of given and surnames, such as Aenna Mae Black, Ana Black, Del Moye, Della Moye, and Eoline Thorngtong. But with patience, these errors do allow one to trace contestants by their home city, club, and various misprints of their names.

There is no doubt that the *Afro-American* and the *Chicago Defender* contribute immensely to the identity of the women in the playing field, the honorable mentions, and the legends. The news media provides a mother lode of material that has been missing from all of the books and reference tools. These newspapers present the proof of documentation and a gallery of the elusive photographs that are critical to the identification of the African American women pioneers in the game of golf.

The *Chicago Defender* has the most photographs, although many of them are stock photographs that are used repeatedly with a different story line. The woman golfer in most of the photographs is Ann Gregory.

Both papers were very supportive of Althea Gibson during her golf trials. They printed feature articles and photographs of her at various outings and in a myriad of golf poses. One photograph of interest is of Gibson preparing for the 1962 United States Golf Association Women’s Amateur tournament held in Rochester, New York.

The newspapers also provide ample coverage of most of the UGA Open Championship tournaments. In several cases, the name of the woman champion is omitted from the article. The names of Mary Brown,⁴ Carrie Jones,⁵ Renee Powell,⁶ Ann Gregory,⁷ and Ethel Funches⁸ are omitted in a few cases. As an
afterthought or appeasement, the name of the woman was sometimes printed the following year as the defending champion.

Sparse and intermittent coverage of the Open tournaments begins in the mid-sixties. The papers indicate when and where the Open tournaments took place, but there is no mention of the results of the events. Perhaps the lack of coverage is due to

- Unrest caused by the Civil Rights movement, which caused golfers to reduce their travel across the country in cars
- Joe Louis fights—golf news slacked off during his fights and after he ceased to be a sponsor and a participant in the tournaments
- Tournaments sponsored by major corporations with the financial influence to lure golfers away from the UGA’s lower purse events
- Loss of top stars Sifford, Elder, Brown, Dent, and Thorpe to the PGA Tour, which caused golf interest in the UGA’s endeavors to wane

By the seventies, the newspapers appeared to no longer be interested in the affairs of the United Golfers Association.

The cause for this reduction in sports coverage may have been attributed to

- Racial integration, allowing golfers to play at various venues in the United States, Caribbean, Mexico, and Europe
- More local groups using golf outings to raise funds for charity
- Other sports capturing top media attention, such as boxing (Ali), baseball (Aaron), and tennis (Ashe)
- The demise and dissolution of the United Golfers Association as a governing body

The lack of newspaper coverage of the organization from the sixties to the eighties still remains as a focus for further attention. The records and memorabilia that were to be archived at the proposed UGA Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame located at the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio, must have found refuge somewhere.

The newspapers do solve two mysteries about one United Golfers Association Championship winner, Thelma Cowan(s). The first mystery is, What is the correct version of her last name—Collins, Cowan, or Cowans? The name appears as Thelma Cowan in most sources. The newspapers print the name as Thelma Collins, Thelma Cowan, or Thelma Cowans. Finally, the mystery was solved in the September 7, 1947, issue of the Chicago Defender on page 11: “Mrs. Thelma Cowans of Detroit and wife of Russ Cowans, Managing Editor of the Michigan Chronicle.”
The second mystery is why Alma Arvin is not the 1956 United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Champion. Again, the September 8, 1956, issue of the *Chicago Defender* provides the answer on page 17. The headline reads “Move to Strip Thelma Cowans of Title. Initiate Drive after Meet Brawl,” by Malcolm Poindexter. The United Golfers Association National Open tournament was held at the Cobbs Creek Golf Course in Philadelphia on August 20–24, 1956: “The 1955 defending champion, Thelma Cowans, appeared 1 3/4 hours late for her match, which started at 6:00 a.m. Her opponent, Alma Arvin, had already completed nine holes. Cowans appeared on the tenth hole and then walked off after she lost the hole. A disturbance occurred and Cowans refused to relinquish the title and be dethroned by her opponent, Alma Arvin, of the Pitch & Putt Club, Baltimore, Maryland.”

The UGA Rules clearly state that any player who is late for a match automatically forfeits the match. In this case, the UGA Rules Committee reneged on the rule and deemed the original match null and void. Then the two women played eighteen holes of match play and Cowans retained the title, 1 up. Alma Arvin was too much of a lady to protest the fiasco, but the injustice should be rectified in the record books.

The newspapers should have documented the event by saying “Alma Arvin of Baltimore, MD, is the reigning 1956 United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Champion. She won the Championship title match by a score of 9 up,” then have, as a bonus, a photograph of Miss Arvin holding the trophy.

The newspapers summarized the action of the tournaments in print and photographs. This is the only documentation that the women existed and played on the fairways. The photographs also provide a way to visually identity the women. Newspaper citations to the photographs of some of the pioneers can be found in Appendix A.
The Legal Thrust of the Titles

Professional opportunities for minority females have been severely restricted in the sports arena. Many minority females have faced and experienced sports inequities throughout their academic endeavors from high school to college. But the revolution in female sports participation began with the passage of two Congressional Acts: Title VI (Title Six) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX (Title Nine), the Educational Amendment of 1972.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or natural origin. Title IX, the Educational Amendment Act of 1972, requires that educational institutions receiving federal funds must provide equivalent programs for males and females. Although the language of Title IX (Programs) is patterned after Title VI (Civil Rights), the protection is based on being male or female. Title IX applies only to sex discrimination and is gender neutral. When both Acts are used in conjunction, they provide protection for females and minorities to learn and participate in individual, group, and extramural sports programs without discrimination.

Title IX ensures the inclusion to participate in any sport and provides vast opportunities for women, especially minority women. Without Title IX, sports and sports careers would have eluded many of these women. Title IX mandates that scholarships and educational opportunities at high schools and colleges must be fairly distributed between males and females. The law was passed primarily for educational reasons, but has become known for its impact on sports.¹

Many African American women burst upon the scene in pursuit of their athletic endeavors, regardless of the sport. There is much pressure put on minority females to participate in the team sport areas of track and field or basketball. It appears as if the notion is that minorities can only function in a team component
with a designated role. The encouragement is limited in individual performance sports, such as tennis, archery, swimming, skating, golf, fencing, gymnastics, and aquatic and equestrian activities. In these sports, the individual is more responsible for the solo performance accountability. The team versus individual high achievement ratio is very evident by the sports accomplishments of the following Hall of Fame and Olympian women on the national sports scene from 1964 to 2004:

- **Basketball**—Cheryl Miller, Chamique Holdsclaw, Lisa Leslie, Sheryl Swoopes, Jackie White, Lynette Woodward, Tamika Catchings
- **Track and Field**—Evelyn Ashford, Gail Devers, Marion Jones, Jackie Joyner-Kersee, Florence Griffith-Joyner, Mary Decker, Madeline Murray, Wilma Rudolph
- **Tennis**: Althea Gibson, Zina Garrison, Serena Williams, Venus Williams
- **Gymnastics**—Dominique Dawes, Donna Lynn Mosley
- **Volleyball**—Flo Hyman
- **Ice Skating**—Debbie Thomas
- **Hockey**— Briana Scurry
- **Bobsled**—Vonetta Flowers

These women represent Hall of Fame inductees, Sports Women of the Year, Athlete of the Year, National Player of the Year, Outstanding Player of the Year, and National Female Athlete of the Year. In addition, they have won their share of Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals in the Olympiads.

There is no comparison between these women, in various sports, and the African American women in golf. This is because the aforementioned women are well-known and world-acclaimed athletes in their particular sports. Everyone can associate them with their personal achievements. On the other hand, only four African American women can claim to have been acknowledged in golf. However, no one seems to remember their names and association with the sport of golf: Ann Gregory, Althea Gibson, Renee Powell, and LaRee Sugg.

These women did not have to go to court to enable them to play in the U.S. Opens or to play on the Ladies Professional Golf Tour. But they did have to qualify for the privileges to play. Maybe this is why more African American women have not attempted to qualify to play at the higher levels of competitive golf. The primary deterrent appears to be the financial obligations associated with the sport. Even the great and one-of-a-kind tennis champion Althea Gibson had to qualify and ran into debt playing the sport. Althea Gibson is still not acclaimed worldwide as a golfer or as the one who broke the color barrier on the Ladies Professional Golf Tour.
It is also ironic that the success of Althea Gibson was wedged between the two Congressional Acts and in two different sports. The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, the same year that Althea Gibson earned the prestigious Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) credentials to play on the Tour. By 1971, she was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame as the first woman of color. Title IX was passed in 1972, and in 1974 Donna deVarona founded the Women’s Sports Foundation Hall of Fame. This was the first Hall of Fame devoted to the achievements of women only.

Again, Althea Gibson was the first woman of color to be inducted into the International Women’s Sports Hall of Fame in 1980.

The advent of Title IX made golf scholarships available to everyone and alleviated the burden of financial encumbrances. Title IX has given the minority community youth a chance to opt for a golf scholarship instead of a basketball or track-and-field scholarship. Now that the golf climate is so positive the two most popular sources for golf athletic financial aid are

1. *The PING American College Golf Guide*
2. *Athletic scholarships*

Becoming familiar with the financial opportunities that are available is essential to the educational process and is a requirement for success. Over 1,180 colleges in the United States have golf programs with financial aid available for men and/or women at the same institution. This access to a myriad of programs expanded the choices of students in the selection of institutions.

A growing trend is that minority students have opted to apply to the more prestigious academic schools and not apply to the Historic Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). This trend has caused the Black Colleges to recruit more of their aspiring golfers from other races and other countries. It seems to be uncanny, but, there are entire golf teams with white participants, both male and female, at the Intercollegiate Minority Golf Championships. The Intercollegiate Minority Golf Championships is basically comprised of the HBCUs. So far, only 21 of the HBCUs provide golf scholarships.²

Although scholarships are available, the community and environment must be conducive for the youngsters, especially the females, to accept and to pursue the sport as a means to an end. The costs of equipment, practice facilities, and a coach mean nothing if a child does not have transportation to get to the golf course or an adult to provide encouragement throughout the process of development. It is obvious that most golf courses are not located near a bus route or within walking distance of African American communities.
One must also consider that the atmosphere of golf can generate negative and unsettling feelings if the minority student or athlete is the “only one.” In that case, the minority often opts for a team sport. There are still sports fans who believe in the old adage that “golf is a thinking man’s game.” This is the same adage that was applied to “a Black cannot be a quarterback” or “a Black cannot be a pitcher” because one must be able to think.

These beliefs are still pervasive in the sports world and have kept many male and female athletes from pursuing golf for the pleasure of the game or as a career choice.

During the fifties and sixties the United Golfers Association, the Chicago Women’s Golf Club, the Western States Golf Association, and the Wake Robin Golf Club had the foresight to implement viable Junior Golf training programs to prepare many youngsters for scholarship eligibility before Title IX was available to minorities. These youngsters were groomed to accept and maintain academic and athletic scholarships from any college in the United States. Some of the outstanding junior girls of that period of time were Doris Evans, Mildred Montgomery, Renee Powell, Madeline Turner, Tonya Jackson, Ernestine Philpott, Deborah Rhodes, Viola Nams, Jeannine Williams, Emma Savage, Yvonne Amber, Carolyn Frazier, Jennifer Armstrong, Donna Brown, Rita Hart, and Stephanie Wilson.

Renee Powell was the only junior girl of that period who eventually pursued golf as a career. She has achieved much success on the Ladies Professional Golf Tour and is recognized as a worldwide Ambassador of golf.

Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education, gave his assessment of Title IX during its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1997:

I am sure somewhere in America today there are young women who are studying hard and achieving success on the athletic field. . . . They may not know of the existence of Title IX, but Title IX will be there for them should any of them encounter a skeptic who does not believe that they can succeed and be part of the American Dream.

As recently as 2006, the legality of Title IX has come under attack. Many institutions are calling for a reversal of Title IX and propose a “reverse discrimination” agenda in its stead.

Tamika Catchings, who plays for the WNBA Indiana Fever Basketball team, wrote in a commentary in the USA Today newspaper that “each girl should be allowed to pursue her dream. . . . Title Nine has enabled female athletes to do just that, and the next generation deserves no less. . . . Preserving Title Nine is the right thing to do.”
Perhaps as an amen, the African American women golf legends would add in unison that a person must be a competitive warrior to play golf, because the enactment of Title VI and Title IX does not modify the negative behavior that is to be encountered on the playing field.

As African Americans, there are many obstacles to overcome. The athlete must be prepared to build on the legacy of the legends and ponder—where do I go from here—sports chaos or sports champion?"
The first governing body formed for African American males to play golf was the United Golfers Association (UGA). The Association was formed in 1926 at Stowe, Maine, by Robert Hawkins. His aim was to bring the membership of all the individual clubs throughout the country, under one authoritative, competition aegis.

Although this unification nationalized the game for African American males, many talented women were excluded from the UGA, but were encouraged to play golf. This benevolent affront by their own men, mostly husbands, did not alleviate the frustration of the women golfers. In 1937, two major women's golf clubs were formed: the Wake Robin Golf Club and the Chicago Women's Golf Club.

Although both clubs were established to seek golf privileges, each was in the forefront of providing equality for women to have separate club autonomy.

The Wake Robin Golf Club was instrumental in dissolving the walls of racial prejudice throughout the Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., areas. Their accomplishments opened the doors for minority golfers to have access to any public, tax-supported golf facility in these geographical areas.

The Chicago Women's Golf Club also broke a racial barrier by recognizing the talent of Ann Gregory, the consummate amateur golfer of the era. The Chicago Women's Golf Club applied to the United States Golf Association (USGA) for membership, so that their remarkable Ann Gregory would be eligible to play in USGA sanctioned events. Gregory did not disappoint the club; she displayed an outstanding flair for the game wherever she played.

It is so important for African American women to find a colleague who is not afraid to rise to the top level of the game, and let them ride the crest of the wave. Sometimes, this even requires underwriting expenses so that the talent can get
into national competitions. Unfortunately, egos sometimes circumvent the display of talent, and a golden opportunity is lost.

It must be emphasized that these women took up golf as adults and were mostly self-taught. Some had the pleasure of tagging along with their husbands and learned the game through trial and error, as well as mimicry. Only a few had the luxury of having an instructor or coach. Dawkins (2000) lists some of the outstanding amateur players of the Jim Crow-era like Ella Able, Thelma Cowans, Ethel Funches, Ann Gregory, and Lucy Williams. Not since this cadre of women, who played well into the sixties and seventies, has such a group of African American women golfers appeared on the national level. Althea Gibson, Renee Powell, and LaRee Sugg only appear to be specks in a dust storm of history.

The Wake Robin and Chicago Women’s Golf Clubs are often mentioned historically, because they were established in 1937. The two organizations provided a sense of credibility for the self-determination and self-esteem of African American women golfers. They developed the blueprint for a “we can do this” style for success in the game of golf. They created the legacy.

Praise is also to be given the women who dared to follow in the footsteps of these pioneers to form “Women Only” clubs. There are many clubs that may have been overlooked and are not listed below. These are a few that have been identified as the heirs of the legacy:

- Choi-Settes Peace Golf Club, Chicago, est. 1960
- Debutante Golf Club, Philadelphia, est. circa 1965
- Ebony Ladies Golf Association, Chicago/Riverdale, est. 1974
- Green’s Ladies Golf Club, Philadelphia, est. 1954
- Monumental Women’s Auxiliary, Baltimore, est. circa 1960
- Vernondale Women’s Golf Club, Los Angeles, est. 1947
- Women of the Sixth City Golf Club, Cleveland, est. circa 1960
- Tee Divas, Los Angeles, est. 1996

Today, there are many “African American Women Only” golf organizations, with their own charters, officers, and tournaments. Their most impressive attribute is the willingness to teach more women to play the game.

It is a sad but given fact that the women’s golf clubs of the twenty-first century are still facing the racial improprieties of the 1930s. One of the goals of the Wake Robin Golf Club was “to make a permanent place for Negro women in the world of golf.”
Wake Robin Golf Club

The Wake Robin Golf Club was established on April 22, 1937 in Washington, D.C. The elected officers were

Helen Webb Harris—president
Adelaide Adams—vice president
Dorothy Booth—financial secretary
Evelyn Beam—recording secretary
Mabel Jones—club instructor
Vydie Carter—reporter
Ethel Williams—chaplain

The other six charter members were Jerenia Reid, Isabelle Betts (Neale), Hazel Foreman, Anna Johnson (Brooks), Bernice Proctor (Page), and Stella Skinker (Evans).1

The aims of the Wake Robin Golf Club were to “perpetuate golf among Negro women, to make potential players into champions, and to make a permanent place for Negro women in the world of golf.” These were lofty goals for a women’s golf club formed thirteen years before the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA).

The women were active in petitioning for desegregation of golf courses, contributing funds to charity, and participating in tournaments. Their tenacity and demonstrative leadership in golf stimulated the formation of female clubs in other major cities, such as Baltimore, Atlantic City, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York City. They also contributed their organizational and leadership skills to the UGA.

The respect earned by the Wake Robins was such that Helen Webb Harris was elected as a first vice president of the UGA, and Paris Brown became the first female director of UGA tournaments.

The women worked untiringly with the Royal Golf Club (men) to desegregate the golf courses in the Washington, D.C.-Maryland-Virginia areas. Their courage brought about the development of the Langston Golf Course. This 9-hole golf course opened on June 9, 1939. It was designated as the first facility for Black golfers to play. After many long years of legal battles, political uproars, marches, and picket lines, the desegregation ban was finally lifted. The course was expanded into an 18-hole facility in 1955. The ladies of the Wake Robin Golf Club had won.2

The Langston Golf Course is named for John Merler Langston, the first colored person to serve in the United States House of Representatives from Virginia. It is now a 145-acre, full-service golf facility located on Benning Road, NE in Washington, D.C. Langston is listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

The legacy of the Wake Robin Golf Club is still active in the twenty-first century and boasts a membership of over fifty women. In addition to their original 1937
goals, the Wake Robin Golf Club financially supports several charitable venues. The golf related initiatives are the InterClub Federation of Golfers’ Junior Golf Program, and the Wake Robin Golf Club Papers collection, maintained in the Moorland-Springarn Research Center at Howard University.

Chicago Women’s Golf Club

The CWGC was formed on November 16, 1937, by Anna Mae Black (Robinson), Vivian Pitts, and Cleo Ball. Their goals were to continue the interest in golf during the winter months, and to encourage the beginner golfer to obtain the skills necessary to play and enjoy the game. Taking a cue from the Wake Robins, the club sent Anna Mae Black and Ella M. Williams to the 1939 UGA national meeting, for the purpose of obtaining a membership under the auspices of the UGA. The next year the annual meeting was hosted by the CWGC, with Geneva Wilson and Elizabeth Mitchell serving on the UGA Golf Championship Committee.

The club petitioned for and secured the county-owned Pipe O’ Peace Golf Club for their annual tournaments. In 1956 the CWGC gained membership in the United States Golf Association (USGA). Their affiliation allowed Ann Gregory the
opportunity to become the first African American woman to compete in USGA-sanctioned women’s amateur events.

The CWGC was also instrumental in forming the Bob-O-Links, in 1953, for junior golfers. The women who were responsible for providing instructions, practice facilities, and tournaments were Agnes Williams, Anna Mae Black (Robinson), and Birdie Philpott. The Bob-O-Links teaching pro was Archie Knuckles.³

The most impressive innovative attainments of their creative genius are:

1. obtaining financial support from corporate sponsors for their tournaments⁴
2. joining the United States Golf Association
3. establishing the UGA Golfers Hall of Fame

The Chicago Women’s Golf Club is still in existence, with a membership of over seventy-five active golfers. The group is the only women’s golf club in the nation with a clubhouse, which was built in 1959.

**Vernondale Women’s Golf Club/Vernoncrest Golf Club**

There seems to be an honor attached to being the first. The Vernondale Women’s Golf Club in Los Angeles has the distinction of being the “Pearl of the
West Coast.” Vernondale was founded in July 1947 by Mae Crowder. Charter members were

- Lola Beaver
- Anise Clark
- Martha Clisby
- Georgette Evans
- Lillian Fentress
- Verna Hickman
- Lois Hines
- Roberta Jackson
- Maudelle Richardson
- Mary L. Woodyard

The founding members were the pioneers in organizing African American women to play golf in California, and they were also instrumental in the formation of the Western States Golf Association (WSGA) in 1953. Thereafter, the name of Vernondale was soon changed to the Vernoncrest Golf Club, with Mary L. Woodyard taking over the helm as president.


The agenda of the Club, under its current leadership is

- To promote golf for women of all playing levels
- To encourage and support WSGA’s Junior Golf and scholarship programs
- To perpetuate the legacy of African American women golfers such as Maggie Hathaway and Ella Mae Reason

**Tee Divas Golf Club**

The Tee Divas Golf Club was formed in November 1996 as an outgrowth of the Western States Golf Association’s (WSGA), Southern Area “Women in Golf Program.” The founder, Doris LaCour, wanted to introduce and expose more career-oriented women to the game of golf. As members, they enjoy the game in a positive environment of acceptance and camaraderie. The beginner can be trained in the learning module and still compete in tournaments, whereas, the
The Sky Caddie: Organizations

experienced player is challenged in the more traditional and competitive venues. In addition to participating in USGA-sanctioned golf tournaments, the women are involved in community and civic activities. Each member is expected to promote the vitality of the Club by being proactive in tournaments, fund raising, and recruiting.

The group travels extensively throughout the continental United States, and abroad to other countries. These excursions provide members with opportunities to play golf on various courses, and to experience a wide range of cultural encounters. The membership indicates that the membership fosters an environment that is the perfect blend of hospitality, sports, and nature.

The continued goals of the Tee Divas Golf Club are

- To provide members an opportunity to gain confidence in their playing ability
• To improve skills through monthly club play, clinics, and regional events
• To support junior golf, scholarships, and women-in-golf programs
• To develop a college scholarship initiative for juniors

The Tee Divas Golf Club is unique in that it is now a co-ed club, which includes men who share the same desires to learn and to play golf. The name of the organization was changed in 2004 to the “Tee Divas and Tee Dudes Golf Club.”

Green’s Ladies Golf Club

The Green’s Ladies Golf Club, Inc. was organized in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The catalyst of the club was Lorraine Sawyer. Mrs. Sawyer called a meeting on May 1, 1954, to establish the first women’s only golf club in the Philadelphia area. The founding members were Opal C. Shields, Alma Fay Horn, Mary Francis Simpson, Lebertha Slocum, Lillian Cherry, Ann Wilson, and Gladys Gray.
The purpose of the Club was to create a totally autonomous women’s group that would:

1. Serve as a recreational and governance outlet for women
2. Be beneficial to the operation and growth of community affairs
3. Create a training program to interest the youth in the game

The first tournament of the Green’s Ladies Golf Club was a successful event held in 1956. The club soon became a member of the Eastern Golf Association (EGA) and the United Golfers Association (UGA). The annual Tournament of the Club is known as the Keystone Open.

The Junior Golf Program for teenage girls was organized in the early sixties. Stephanie Wilson and Rita Hart were representative of some of the outstanding junior girls who participated in UGA tournaments during the seventies and eighties. One of the notable highlights of the Green’s Ladies Club is that it was among the first organizations to purchase stock and ownership in acquiring the Greater Philadelphia Golf and Country Club in 1967. The present membership consists of twenty-five active members and the current president is Delores Andy.

**Ladies Professional Golf Tours (USA)**

The Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) claims to be the longest-running women’s sports association in the world. The LPGA tour traces its history back to the 1940s. Betty Hicks and a group of other women golfers formed the Women’s Professional Golf Association (WPGA) in 1944. The WPGA lasted for five years, but the impetus for the LPGA had begun.

The name of the organization designated as the Ladies Professional Golf Association was started in the 1950s by thirteen women players. The women actively solicited the financial support of the corporate golf manufacturers to stake their claim. The LPGA became a recognized competitive entity with a solid financial base and with Patty Berg as its first president.

The color barrier in women’s professional golf was broken in 1963 by Althea Gibson. She was later joined by Renee Powell in 1967. However, the depth of talent in the Association was not fully appreciated until the enactment of Title IX, and the appearance of a Title IX recipient, Nancy Lopez. During the 1970s, Nancy Lopez became the star of the LPGA Tour. Her professional golf career consists of forty-eight tournament wins and an earned place in the 1987 World Golf Hall of Fame.
In 1981 Eloise Trainor formed the Tampa Bay Mini Tour to provide competition for women who did not qualify for the LPGA tour. Within ten years, the Mini Tour had become known as the FUTURES Tour, and had provided an opportunity for many women to become future LPGA golf stars. By 1999 the FUTURES Tour had become the official developmental tour of the LPGA. The top five players on the money list, at the end of the year, earn the coveted exempt status on the LPGA tour for the following year.

To date, only five African American women have taken advantage of the FUTURES Tour format:

Dora Broadus—joined the Tour in 2002
Nakia Davis—joined the Tour in 1996
Paula Pearson-Tucker—joined the Tour in 2001
Darlene Stowers—joined the Tour in 1998
LaRee Sugg—earned exempt status to the LPGA in 1998

It is not known if these women were welcomed with opened arms and embraced by the FUTURES Tour members. But they went to the FUTURES Tour with some extraordinary collegiate golf credentials.

They also went to the Tour with high expectations of becoming a productive player by placing in the top five spots, and paving the road to LPGA Professional status.

The present name of the tour has changed to reflect its primary sponsor. The official name is the Duramed FUTURES Tour.

**Summary**

The purpose for each one of these organizations indicates that they found a need for a support group to aid them in their quest for identification in the sport of golf. They found that women with similar goals could understand the need to exhibit the talent. For the Wake Robin Golf Club and the Chicago Women’s Golf Club, the purpose was to find women who wanted to play on an amateur basis, and have the clout to be an active participant in any tournament. The goals of the LPGA and the FUTURES Tour were to find an avenue of financial support to play on a professional level, and to gain parity with the men.

Actually, the goals for all the women’s golf groups were the same, except that the Black clubs did not have built-in home courses or practice facilities. They were still second-class citizens within a second-class citizenry, compounded by Black male intolerance to their display of talent. The LPGA and FUTURES Tours eventually were able to secure corporate sponsorships to carry on their mis-
sions. The Black women operated under the aegis of the United Golfers Association. They had to assume all the costs for the privilege of playing in tournaments. The Chicago Women’s Golf Club was the first to actively seek support from a corporate sponsor.

Black talent is missing the big brass ring, because they do not have the financial backing that is necessary to play without the financial onus of debt. After four years of college, they are reluctant to ask their already financially strapped families to underwrite four more years, in order to qualify in Q-school or to play on the various mini tours. There needs to be a conduit for the talented tenth to seek help in formulating a career path in golf.

African American golfers need a bridge between themselves and an agent and sponsors. Someone needs to be there to intercede on their behalf. They should have a support system in place, especially after college, to map out the road beforehand. This conduit can ensure that there will be no financial encumbrances or scheduling delays. The coaches and agents can provide some services on a pro bono basis. Corporate sponsors and equipment companies can provide stipends for the weekly grind. But, there must be a well-established system in place to contact and induce these companies to donate to the cause.

Instead of one or two African American women golf clubs, they can all unite into a solid bloc, and become a united African American women’s golf consortium. The clubs would still maintain their individual autonomy, yet they could contribute to the vitality of the consortium. The consortium, in turn, would have the expertise, finances, and power to take care of business for the group of young and eager African American women golfers, who are aspiring to become a mini or major tour member.
The history of the African American woman golfer was shaped and molded by many women. Their contributions were gradual and the impact has never been truly appreciated in the world of golf or as a part of the history of sports.

The period of time from 1930 to the present can be divided into several pivotal segments:

- The Awakening, 1930
- The Club Factor, 1937
- The Emergence, 1946
- Breaking the Jim Crow Laws, 1951
- The Renaissance, 1970

It should be easy to understand the efforts of the African American woman in golf. We only have to reflect on the barriers encountered and the anguish felt by women such as Marie Thompson, Helen Webb Harris, Ann Gregory, and Althea Gibson.

The Awakening occurred in the thirties. The African American woman golfer was an oddity, and may have been tolerated or viewed as a nuisance by her spouse. A group of African American women playing competitively, on a golf course, received much ridicule. However, the United Golfers Association (UGA) occasionally allowed women to play in some of its regional tournaments. Finally, in 1930, the UGA let women compete in the Annual National Open Championship, held at the Casa Loma Golf Course, in Powers Lake, Wisconsin.

Miss Marie Thompson, an amateur from the Pioneer Club in Chicago, was the first woman to win the UGA Open Championship Women's Division. She
won the next UGA Open Championship in 1931, held at the Kankakee Golf Course in Kankakee, Illinois. Her consecutive wins in this major tournament validated the persona and the competitiveness of the African American woman golfer.

A cadre of women dominated the field of golf in Black America from 1930 to 1941. As more women began to play, their names were listed as part of the tournament roster. The women were perennial competitors, who may have represented their clubs or played as a lone maverick in regional tournaments and UGA National Open Championships. There were continuous rivalries between the East Coast, Midwest, and West Coast women.

Many of the women would win one year, and then come in second or third the following year. Others would win the club title two to six times consecutively during their careers. Most likely, some would never win at all, but they continued to chase the dream. The playing fields were composed of groups of these special women from Black communities. They left their families and traveled in motorcades, for hundreds of miles during the summer months, in order to play in the tournaments. They were amateurs and were excited to be playing for the love of the game, a title, and a trophy. The title or trophy could not be cashed at the bank or traded for goods and services. They also suffered ridicule, cash flow problems, and, in some cases, family discord. The women had to pay to play. Out of pocket expenses included entry fees, travel costs, food, and lodging. All of this was just for the chance to win.

The women would travel from Boston to Atlanta, New York to Los Angeles, and from Chicago to Dallas to play in a tournament. Some of the designated tournament stops were

- New York Open
- New Jersey Open
- Maryland State Open
- Joe Louis Amateur Open
- Pennsylvania Open
- St. Louis Paramount
- Chicago Golf Classic
- Minnesota Open
- Detroit Memorial
- Walter Speedy Invitational
- LA Vernondale Open
- Cleveland 6th City Tournament

The media began to take notice of the groups of women as competitors, but the only biographical data given may have been as a reference to their hometown or club affiliation. Most of the written information was succinct and included only a vignette or two, but the women were consistently identified as the best women golfers in the UGA competitions. These short references would mention that the women were actively involved in a tournament. A typical mention was printed as “The Maryland State Open was won by Margaret Brown.”
The Awakening of the African American woman golfer began in the thirties. Two groups of women made an impact on the UGA—the individual protagonists and the “women’s only” golf clubs.

Four dynamic women acted as individual competitors and transformed the world of Black golf. They dared to be different and had the courage to compete on the insular fairways of the golf courses. They challenged the male golfer in his own arena. There were no organized feminist groups to give them the support of solidarity. But they arrived anyway with the athletic skills, the bravery, and the game plan to win multiple UGA titles.

The women who dominated the UGA National Amateur Championships collectively won nine of the twelve UGA National Amateur Women’s Open tournaments held during that period.

- Marie Thompson (Jones) of the Pioneer Club in Chicago, 1930, 1931
- Lucy Williams (Mitchum) from the Douglas Park Course in Indianapolis, 1932, 1936, 1937
- Ella C. Abel, of the Douglas Park Course in Indianapolis, 1934, 1935
- Geneva Wilson, playing out of Chicago, 1939, 1940

Their competitors in the fields consisted of each other, in addition to other UGA Champions: Julia Siler (1933), Melnee Moye (1938), Cleo Ball (1941), and the perennial favorites: Vivian Pitts, Sarah Smith, Margaret Brown, Thelma McTyre (Cowans), Rhoda Fowler, Ethel Terrell, and Theresa McTyre (Howell).

The women’s clubs movement was significant because it brought something valuable to the table: organizational and people management skills. These qualities were needed by the UGA.

The Club Factor was established when Helen Harris organized the first documented women’s club with the help of a few friends, in 1937. The Wake Robin Golf Club was not only organized for the purpose of playing golf, but to empower women to become proactive in a segregated environment. The formation of Wake Robins gave impetus for the women to organize for tournaments on local, regional, and national levels.

The Chicago Women’s Golf Club was also organized in 1937. The chief architects of the club were Anna Mae Black (Robinson), Cleo Ball, Vivian Pitts, and Geneva Wilson. Ball and Wilson later won UGA National Women’s titles. The Chicago Women’s Golf Club is associated with many firsts. One of the most important was that it was the first to sponsor an African American amateur in a United States Golf Association (USGA) tournament.

The Chicago Women’s Golf Club was also the first female group to sponsor a titled male event—the Walter Speedy Invitational, named after the renowned
golfer and founder of the Pioneer Golf Club. This was one of the tournaments that attracted the most prominent male golfers and was sanctioned by the UGA.

The Wake Robin Golf Club and the Chicago Women’s Golf Club still maintain active memberships and will celebrate their seventieth anniversaries in 2007. They established the model for the “women only” clubs that exist today across America.

No UGA National tournaments were held during the World War II years of 1942 to 1945. All competitive tournaments were sponsored by local or regional clubs.

The UGA revived the National Championships in 1946 with a post–World War II tournament in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was at this event that Lucy Williams (Mitchum) won her fourth UGA National Women’s Amateur title. The number of National Amateur title wins by one person was raised to another level for both women and men.

Pioneers discussed in this section are

- Ella Able
- Alma Arvin
- Cleo Ball
- Paris Brown
- Mae Crowder
- Helen Harris
- Lucy Williams
- Melnee Moye
- Anna Robinson
- Julia Siler
- Sarah Smith
- Marie Thompson
- Agnes Williams
- Geneva Wilson

Ella C. Able

United Golfers Association National Open Champion

There is no data describing the birthplace of Ella C. Able or her family life. It is noted that she played out of the Douglas Park Golf Club in Indianapolis, Indiana. She was among the pioneer women who competed in the first 1930 UGA National Open Women’s tournament at the Casa Loma course in Wisconsin. She also played in the next four tournaments that were open to women candidates in 1931, 1932, 1933, and 1934.

In 1934 Able turned in the lowest score for thirty-six holes at the Kankakee site in Illinois, to defeat Lucy Williams (Mitchum), and the 1933 defending champion, Julia Siler, for the UGA Open title. Ms. Able went on to defend the title in 1935, in Detroit, Michigan, against another stellar field.

It is speculated that Able played competitive golf until the cancellation of all UGA sanctioned tournaments from 1942 to 1945.

Ella Able, the UGA Women’s Champion for 1934 and 1935, is not listed as an inductee in any of the African American Golf Halls of Fame.
**Alma Arvin**
*United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

Alma Arvin is the personification of what it is to maintain a positive demeanor in the face of adversity during a competitive situation. She was able to demonstrate this with the class of a lady and the professionalism of an athlete at the 1956 UGA National Open Women’s Championship.

Alma Arvin and Thelma Cowans, the 1955 defending champion, were scheduled to compete for the 1956 championship trophy and title. Arvin had completed nine holes of the tournament before Cowans appeared on the tenth hole. Ms. Arvin was declared the winner by default when Cowans did not show up for the tournament on time. Cowans, however, refused to admit defeat or to relinquish the title to Alma Arvin.

Although the Rules Committee was remiss in their responsibilities to Ms. Arvin, she willingly gave up the title and trophy and agreed to play an additional eighteen holes in match play with Mrs. Cowans. Cowans won the match by one up. Even with protests by the other women contestants, the Rules Committee let Cowans retain the UGA title and the trophy for 1956.

The actions of Ms. Arvin brought unity out of chaos, and saved the UGA from an embarrassing situation. She chose a second place finish, even though she had won the championship on the first tee. Her decision is historic, in that she put the success of the tournament first. Her decision is a perfect example of why one’s dignity is more important than a trophy and title. She is still a champion among her peers.

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**Cleo Ball**
*United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

Cleo Ball was never inducted into the United Golfers’ Hall of Fame; however she did make an impact on the organization with her win at the 1941 UGA Open tournament.

Cleo was one of the “perennial innovators” of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club. She was instrumental in promoting competitive golf among women throughout the Midwestern states. She was also the wife of Robert “Pat” Ball.

Robert “Pat” Ball was the golf professional at the Palos Hill Golf Club in Chicago, and was recognized as one of the best golfers in the UGA, with three championship wins in 1927, 1929, and 1934.

In August 1941, Cleo and Pat became the first husband and wife competitors to win major national titles. Cleo won the Open Women’s Championship, and
Pat won the Professional Men’s Championship title. The tournament was held at the Ponkapong Course in Canton, outside of Boston, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Ball had captured her first and only major title, the 1941 UGA Women’s Open Championship. The newspapers described the husband and wife feat as “the Ball Family Affair.”

Paris Brown

*United Golfers Association Tournament Director*

Paris Toomer was born November 15, 1901, in Byron, Georgia. She obtained her education at the Cooke Normal School in St. Louis, Missouri. She married Edgar Brown, and lived her adult life in Washington, D.C.

Her interest in golf began in 1930. She was a founding member of the Wake Robin Golf Club for Colored Women in 1937. Brown was elected the second president of the club in 1939. She became a WRGC delegate to the UGA and was elected the third vice president of the UGA in 1941. This was a first for women in the male-dominated UGA.
Paris Brown was inducted into the UGA National Afro-American Hall of Fame in 1963. A copy of the embellished plaque could not be obtained, but here is a facsimile. (UGA Hall of Fame, 1963 inscription. Photograph courtesy of the Wake Robin Golf Club Archives.)
Brown was also elected as the first director of UGA tournaments in 1954. She perfected the rules and responsibilities of the players, scorers, and officials. Printed copies of the rules were distributed to all participants, their clubs, and especially to tournament officials. She emphasized that all members should know the rules to prevent errors, time lapses, disorganization of tournament strategy, and poor performance by the players. She ran the tournaments with such perfection that she remained the tournament director for ten years (1954–1964).

Paris Toomer Brown was inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1963.

**Mae Crowder**

*Founder, Vernondale and Vernoncrest Golf Clubs*

The mention of the name Mae Crowder evokes the label “The Lady Who Had a Dream that became True,” for forming a golf club composed predominantly of black women represented, indeed, a dream come true. Mae Crowder

organized the Vernondale Women’s Golf Club in 1947, along with nine other enthusiastic golfing ladies of Los Angeles. This group of women, with Mae Crowder as founder and president, became the first Black women’s golf club on the West Coast. The Vernondale Club eventually changed its name to the Vernoncrest Golf Club.

Mrs. Crowder also shared in giving her full support toward the birth of a united Western States Golf Association (WSGA), which provided an umbrella structure to the many splintered groups from the Midwest to the West Coast. The historic meeting was held at her home in 1953, and she was appointed chairperson of the Junior Golf Program, which she developed into an outstanding and credible asset to the Association.

As a successful businesswoman, Mrs. Crowder was able to guide the fledgling golf organization by providing the basic managerial, financial, legal, and logistic skills necessary to form a core of diverse, individual golf clubs into the largest active African American golf association in the United States.

Mrs. Mae Crowder was inducted into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame for her outstanding contributions and services to the Association from its inception.
Helen Webb Harris

Founder, Wake Robin Golf Club

Helen Webb Harris was one of the original founders of the Wake Robin Golf Club, and served as the first president. The purposes of the WRGC were to encourage Negro women to become involved in the game, in an effort to obtain social and political parity in the community.

Under Harris's leadership the organization became a member of the UGA and the Eastern Golf Association. The women were very active in the desegregation of golf clubs in the Washington, D.C area. The persistence of the women made it possible for the Langston Golf Course to be built to accommodate their activities.

Mae Crowder giving lesson number 3. Photograph courtesy of the Vernoncrest Golf Club.
The organizational acumen of Harris led to her being the first woman elected to the presidency of the Eastern Golf Association. Other firsts for the Wake Robin Golf Club under her guidance were

- To have members elected to the executive boards of the UGA and Eastern Golf Association
- To petition the federal government for playing privileges at a public golf facility
- To donate their records to an academic institution, Howard University, for scholarly research

Harris was inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1973.
Wake Robin Golf Club, ca. 1940: Lorraine Smith, Sara Smith, Clara Reed, Bonita Harvey, Paris Brown, Amelia Lucas, Frankie Watkins, Helen Harris, Hazel Foreman, Jerenia Reid, Adelaide Adams. The photograph was taken at the Langston Golf Course in Washington, D.C. The 9-hole Langston Golf Course was opened on June 9, 1939. After many years of neglect by the U.S. Department of the Interior, the course was renovated and reopened as an 18-hole facility in 1955. The course is still thriving with a diverse ethnic patronage. The Langston Golf Course was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. Photograph courtesy of the Wake Robin Golf Club Archives.
Lucy Williams Mitchum

United Golfers Association National Open Champion

The life and times of Lucy Williams Mitchum are rather obscure in that there does not seem to be any biographical information about her. She appears as one of those ephemeral people whose spirit just lingers as an aura. However, her understanding of the game and her prowess with the golf clubs speaks for her existence and a place in history.

Mitchum, like Thelma Cowans, was part of the Midwest golf contingent, which included such notable golfers as Marie Thompson, Ann Gregory, and Julia Siler. Mitchum was from Indianapolis. She probably played out of the African American Douglas Park Golf Course and Club.

The name of Lucy Williams first appeared as one of the women who played in the inaugural UGA National Open Women’s Championship held at Casa
Loma, Wisconsin. She was awarded the Henry R. Johnson women’s trophy for her second place finish. Lucy Mitchum came in second again in 1931 when the tournament was held in Chicago.

The time for Lucy Williams to make history was in 1932, when the UGA Open was held in her hometown of Indianapolis. The first and second places for the UGA Women’s Championship were reversed. Lucy Williams had finally defeated Marie Thompson for the major title and trophy. The field also included Marion McGruder, Thelma Blanton, Lucille McKee, Anna Mae Johnson, Cookie Hamilton, Ada Bolton, Cleo Halloway, and Julia Siler.

Lucy Williams came in second during the next three years—in 1933 to Julia Siler, and in 1934 and 1935 to Ella Abel. She bounced back quickly and reclaimed her place among the top female contenders. Lucy Williams won the 1936 UGA National Open Women’s title when it was held in Philadelphia and defended the 1937 UGA title when the Open was held in Cleveland.

Lucy Williams was always in contention for the Open Championships from 1938 to 1941. Then, after the “war years,” she picked up the pace again and won the first postwar 1946 UGA National Open Women’s Championship in Pittsburgh.

Although Mitchum was never elected to the UGA/National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, she won the National Women’s Open Championship four times:

1932 in Indianapolis, Indiana
1936 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
1937 in Cleveland, Ohio
1946 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

She was the first golfer, male or female, to claim that honor.

Lucy Williams Mitchum also has the distinction of being in the first Joe Louis Open Women’s Championship in 1946 and winning the title.

**Melnee Moye**

*United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

Melnee Moye was born in Atlanta, Georgia. She played as an amateur in the UGA women’s tournaments for three years as an unknown neophyte. There is no record as to which club she belonged, but Atlanta did have a strong women’s contingent that consisted of the McTyre sisters: Thelma (Cowans) and Theresa (Howell).
After many hours of grueling practice, and disappointments in competitive rounds, Ms. Moye won her first major victory. She utilized all of her energy, stamina, and hopes as she won the ninth annual UGA Women’s Amateur Championship in 1938. Ms. Moye defeated a stellar field which included former UGA women champions such as Marie Thompson (1930, 1931), Lucy Williams (1932, 1936, 1937), Julia Siler (1933), Ella Able (1934, 1935), and future champions Geneva Wilson (1939, 1940) and Cleo Ball (1941).5

Anna Mae Black Robinson  
Founder, Chicago Women’s Golf Club

Anna Mae Black was one of the original founders of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club, with Cleo Ball and Vivian Pitts. She served as president in 1937, and held the office for three terms until the end of 1939. She was also elected the fourth vice president of the UGA at its 1944 annual meeting.

Anna Mae Black Robinson. Photograph courtesy of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club.
Robinson, Ella Williams, and Birdie Philpott petitioned Cook County for privileges to play at the Pipe O’ Peace Golf Club. After many appeals, permission was granted to the CWGC to use the Pipe O’Peace facilities, and the course became the official CWGC tournament site in 1952.

Robinson also saw a need to recognize African American golfers of the era and began a campaign for a UGA Hall of Fame. Through her undaunting efforts the UGA/National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame was established in 1959, as a tribute to all minority golfers.

The CWGC elected Anna Mae Robinson as their thirteenth president in 1960; she served another three terms from 1960–62. During this tenure she was able to gain the support of the Borden Milk Company as a sponsor for the CWGC National Invitational Golf Tournament. Borden was their first corporate sponsor, but not their last.

Anna Mae Black Robinson was inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1962.

Julia Towns Siler

United Golfers Association National Open Champion

Julia Towns Siler is another golfer that all of the historians mention in the realm of African American golf history. She represented the St. Louis group of women golfers. She and her husband George were charter members of the Atwater Golf Club in St. Louis.

Julia Towns Siler is credited with over 100 title wins in her amateur career. Most of them were probably in local and regional tournament events. However, her name can be found among the contenders, in the annual United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championships, as late as the 1950s. She won the Senior women’s title in the 1959 UGA National Open held in Washington DC (Afro American, September 19, 1959, 24).

Her most victorious moment and highlight of her career occurred in 1933. The UGA National Open Championships were held at the Sunset Hills Country Club in Chicago. A September 9, 1933 photograph caption reads “Golf’s King and Queen.” And, there is Julia Siler standing, under the U.S. flag, shaking hands with Howard Wheeler. The newspaper article used only two sentences to describe the victory: “Mrs. Julia Siler is the new women’s champion, defeating last year’s champion, Miss Lucy Williams, of Indianapolis. Miss Marie Thompson, Chicago placed third.”6
Julia Towns Siler was inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1964. As with others of her genre, the documentation as to why she was elected to the Hall of Fame is lost forever.

Sarah Smith
Wake Robin Golf Club Champion

The Wake Robin Golf Club for Colored Women of Washington, D.C. was formed in 1937. As a result, a star was born: Sarah Smith. Smith was the first Wake Robin Golf Club member to win the Club championship title in consecutive years, 1937 and 1938. She also won the title in 1940 and 1945. Although, her record of consecutive titles has been surpassed by several members, Smith made history by being the first.

Ms. Smith also made golf history at the 1941 UGA National Open by earning the Open Women’s Medalist title. She was in a field of competitors that included Julia Siler, Lucy Williams, and Vivian Pitts, when Cleo and Pat Ball won the UGA Open Championship titles.

A list of some of her other golf accomplishments include

- Eastern Golf Association (EGA) Championship in 1941 and 1942
- Maryland State Open Championship Medalist in 1942
- New Jersey Shady Rest Annual Tournament Championship winner in 1945 (the first golf meet opened to women at Shady Rest in seven years)

Marie Thompson
United Golfers Association National Open Champion

It is not known if Marie Thompson was a native of Chicago. The only initial information relative to her existence was that she was a member of the Pioneer Club located in Chicago, Illinois.

In 1930 she was one of a small contingent of women who opted to play in the UGA National Open tournament held in Casa Loma, Wisconsin. Miss Thompson won the 1930 UGA National Open Women’s Championship against a field that included Lucy Williams (Mitchum), Esther Smith, Pearl Dorn, and Lucille McKee. She was awarded the Belle Beauty Salon trophy.

It is obvious that all golfers were stunned when the same woman showed up at the 1931 UGA National Open tournament held in Kankakee, Illinois. Her chief competition included Lucy Williams of Indianapolis, who was in second place, and Elizabeth Grove of the New York City New Amsterdam Golf Club, who secured the third place finish. But, it was Marie Thompson who had won the UGA National Open Women’s Championship for a second time.

The newspaper headlines said it all: “McCoy defeats Frierson for amateur title, Miss Marie Thompson retains crown,” and “Edison Marshall and Marie Thompson...
A photograph with the caption “Wins Again” shows the image of a petite Miss Thompson, dressed in a dark skirt with a white blouse and carrying her clubs in a cloth “Sunday bag.”

Marie Thompson always remained in the top ten positions in the UGA National Open Women’s Championship flights from 1932 to 1941.

In the meantime, Miss Thompson married a postal clerk with the surname of Jones, and eventually relocated to Detroit, Michigan. In Detroit, she became a pivotal force in the formation of, and the success of the Amateur Golfer’s Association (AGA). Mrs. Marie Thompson (Jones) won three straight AGA Women’s titles in 1931, 1932, and 1933. Her fourth documented AGA title was won in 1941.

As with most of the African American women pioneers, her path to golf immortality was stopped cold by the tournament hiatus of the UGA National Open Championships from 1942 to 1945 (the World War II years).

Marie Thompson (Jones) was a woman golfer who dared to be different as early as 1930, a time frame, in the annals of golf, of seventy-seven years. Yet, no one knows of her or remembers her name.

Marie Thompson (Jones), the UGA National Open Women’s Champion of 1930 and 1931, has not been recognized by any of the African American Golf Halls of Fame for her initial historic and unprecedented ventures in the game of golf.

**Agnes Williams**

*Junior Program Advocate, Chicago Women’s Golf Club*

During the Chicago Women’s Golf Club presidency of Geraldine Williams, Agnes Williams dared to discuss the possibility of creating a club-sponsored junior golf program. In 1954, with overwhelming support, Williams became the founder and director of the CWGC’s Bob-O-Links junior division. The goal of the program was to teach youth the fundamentals of the golf game. The first group of participants were the children of members and their friends. The job of coach was assigned to the local pro, Archie Knuckles. The Bob-O-Links was the only official junior club program in existence in Chicago, and probably in Black communities throughout the country.

Williams became the most vocal advocate for the formation of a national minority junior golf program to include minority youth from all areas and all clubs within the United States. She felt that this type of inclusion would bring more juniors into the mix for exposure to the public golf arena, and assist them in learning fundamentals that would carry them to national tournament level.
events. She used her personal time and financial resources to take juniors to various practice facilities and tournaments. Williams was also the guiding force behind the origin of the UGA/Midwest District Junior Championship, which provided a competitive stage for her Bob-O-Links. She was elected to the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1967.

Agnes Williams. Photograph courtesy of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club.
Geneva Wilson
United Golfers Association National Open Champion

Geneva Wilson represents the Chicago Women's Golf Club as a charter member. She was also a driving force in the creation of the Bob-O-Links youth golf initiative established in 1954.

Her competitive golf game was so good that she was in the 1938 UGA National Open Women's Championship flight. The field of sixteen women also included Cleo Ball, Vivian Pitts, Anna Mae Robinson, Marie Thompson, Lucy Williams, and Julia Siler.

Geneva Wilson had come close in the 1938 tournament held at Palos Park in Chicago, but was out of position to her fellow Chicago Women's Golf Club companions. Melnee Moye of Atlanta was the 1938 champion, Vivian Pitts was second, and Cleo Ball placed third.

She vaulted to the top of the 1939 UGA National Women's Open Championship, held at the Harding Golf Course in Burbank, California. She defeated Aline Davis of Chicago for the 1939 championship. The field also included her Chicago Women's Golf Club compatriots, Cleo Ball who came in second, Vivian Pitts who placed third, and Anna Mae Robinson. UGA Champions Lucy Williams, Melnee Moye, Julia Siler, and Marie Thompson were also vying for the title that year.

Geneva Wilson rallied again to the forefront of the 1940 UGA National Open Women's Championship held at the Palos Park Golf Course in Chicago. She won the Championship again in 1940 and is one of ten women to have accomplished the feat of back-to-back wins at this major tournament. Geneva Wilson had to defeat Lucy Williams for the title and the trophy. Williams had defeated Marie Thompson and Juanita Scott of New York City to enter into the final championship match with Geneva Wilson.

The Chicago Women's Golf Club fabulous foursome of Cleo Ball, Vivian Pitts, Anna Mae Robinson, and Geneva Wilson entered into the final 1941 UGA National Open Women's Championship. No UGA National Opens were to be held during the World War II years of 1942 to 1945.

As fate would have it, Cleo Ball, a Chicago Women's Golf Club member, won the 1941 UGA National Open Women's Championship. Her other club member associate, Vivian Pitts, also made a good showing by coming in second, and Geneva Wilson was among the golfers in the championship flight. The women of the Chicago Women's Golf Club were among the best of the pre-war era.

The lifetime achievements of Ms. Wilson, as with many of her contemporaries, are waiting to be discovered by a lucky and fortunate golf enthusiast.

The two-time UGA National Open Women's Champion has not been inducted into any golf hall of fame.

The First Tee: Pioneers
The emergence of the African American woman golfer era was heralded in from 1946 to 1974, when a new group of women began to dominate the competition. These women set a precedent in consecutive and multiple United Golfers Association (UGA) title wins in various cities. They were instrumental in proving that the African American woman golfer, as an athlete, was not going to disappear from the courses or competitions. The following women won eighteen multiple titles out of the next twenty-eight UGA-sponsored National Amateur Women’s tournaments:

- Vernice Turner—1958, 1961 (two times)
- Thelma Cowans—1947, 1949, 1954, 1955 (four times)

The golf world is aware of and idolizes the victorious UGA feats of the Black male golfers, such as Harry Wheeler (four titles), Ted Rhodes (four titles), Charlie Sifford (six titles), Lee Elder (five titles), and Pete Brown (two titles). In comparison, as professionals during the same 1947 to 1975 time frame, they only won twenty-one multiple titles out of the twenty-eight tournaments.

The multiple wins of the women have not been recognized or recorded in an acceptable archival format for the world to appreciate the significance of their accomplishments. They spearheaded the women’s movement in golf, from the thirties to the seventies. However, in the twenty-first century, no one seems to remember their names or their contributions. There is no awareness of their existence. The written records are lost and these women are still invisible in the history of Blacks in golf, despite being civil rights pioneers in the African American woman golfer movement.
The women played throughout the thirties, the forties, and the fifties. They were also a part of the sixties, appearing as crusaders for equality on the golf courses. Freedom! Freedom! We demand freedom and the right to play golf! During the sixties, the men filed discrimination lawsuits to play and incurred the wrath and retaliation of the Professional Golf Association (PGA). It is to be noted that no lawsuits were filed on behalf of the African American woman golfer. There were women golfers who were quiet, but effective forces before this period, during the Civil Rights Movement and beyond.

Breaking the Jim Crow Laws that excluded Blacks was a frightening challenge for women, especially on the golf course. In 1942, a group of Wake Robin golfers, Helen Harris, Francis Watkins, Bonita Harvey, and Kelly Snowden were cursed at and stoned by a white mob while playing at the Fairlawn Golf Course in Washington, D.C.

In 1956, Ann Gregory played in the United States Golf Association (USGA) Women's Amateur Championship at the Meridian Hills Golf Club, in Indianapolis, Indiana. She also played in 1959 at the Congressional Golf Course in Bethesda, Maryland, and in 1960 at the Southern Hills Golf Course in Tulsa, Oklahoma. While these women were trying to integrate the golf world, Althea Gibson would take the integration factor into both the tennis and golf worlds.

It is ironic that in 1951, Althea Gibson integrated the amateur tennis circuit. She was the first African American, female or male, to play in the Wimbledon Championship. In 1956, Gibson won another major championship, the French Open. By 1957, she had also become the first African American to win both the Singles and Doubles Wimbledon Championships, as well as the U.S. Open. Her talent was so extraordinary that she won both titles two times. Gibson retired after years of competing at such a high amateur level. She had broken the color barrier in the United States and the international tennis circuits. It was to be her destiny to overcome, as well, the color barrier in the golf community and the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA).

The year was 1963. The Freedom March on Washington had been successful by all accounts. This was the year that Althea Gibson joined the LPGA as a tour professional. Her first tournament was held at the Kenwood Country Club in Cincinnati, Ohio. She was the first African American to compete in an LPGA-sanctioned tournament. Althea Gibson had broken another racial and career barrier. She earned the coveted LPGA card in 1964 after competing on the tour for a year. In her autobiography, So Much to Live For, it is stated that “she wanted to see the door of all human endeavor thrown open to people of all races.”

Renee Powell was raised on a golf course built by her father, William Powell. She was groomed to be the African American woman competitor on the LPGA Tour. She made her appearance on the Tour in 1967, after establishing amateur and col-
legiate records in Ohio. Powell had the versatility to not only compete on the tour, but also to become a teaching professional and a golf course administrator.

The racial issues of the sixties were still pervasive in the seventies, as is probably to be expected in any multicultural society. The inequities in golf were addressed directly by Maggie Hathaway of Los Angeles. She organized the Minority Association of Golfers (MAG) to seek parity in hiring practices and employment in golf-related jobs. She expressed her belief that minorities were capable of holding any golf-related job, from club professional to greenskeeper. Minorities could do more than cut grass and carry golf bags; therefore they should be gainfully employed at any skills level at a golf course. She was equally vocal about the mistreatment and denial of tournament opportunities for African American men by the Professional Golf Association (PGA).

The seventies closed with the African American community taking an active role in creating and supporting the growth of the junior golf programs in various parts of the country. Professional golfers were actually teaching the basics of the golf swing, course management, and staging junior golf tournaments. The enactment of Title IX, in 1972, provided an opportunity for many African American children to obtain full golf scholarships.

The personal commitment of Agnes Williams, Pearl Carey, Selina Johnson, and Renée Fluker demonstrated that a child’s early exposure to golf instruction and competition could provide diversity in the child’s career choices. This is why we can now see African American women in various golf-related positions.

Women like these dared to be different because they participated in playing golf and then contributed something extra on and outside of the fairways. This remarkable group of women had the foresight and courage to bring changes to golf. They opened the doors, laid the foundations, and left imprints for any young female athlete to emulate. The young women of today are the heirs to their legacy.

The women who took the game to the next level in the history of African-American golf are

- Elizabeth Brabble
- Althea Gibson
- Phyllis Meekins
- Thelma Cowans
- Ann Gregory
- Renee Powell
- Ethel Funches
- Maggie Hathaway
- Carrie Russell
- Winifred Stanford

**Elizabeth W. Brabble**

*President, Wake Robin Golf Club*

Dr. Elizabeth Brabble was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She obtained her masters of science and doctorate degrees from Pennsylvania State University, after graduating from Virginia State University with a bachelor of science.
The focus of her academic and career paths are in human ecology, global economics, and financial management. Her professional credentials include positions as

- Associate Professor, Norfolk State College
- Tenured Associate Professor, University of Maryland, College Park
- Director, International Family Planning, AHEA/USAID
- Director, International Projects, National Capital Systems
- Tenured Associate Professor, Howard University

Dr. Brabble joined the Wake Robin Golf Club in 1976, becoming a part of its distinguished membership and leadership. Prior to her current term in office, she served as president of the club for a total of six years, from 1980–1982 and again from 1996–2000.

It is apparent that Dr. Brabble holds the Wake Robin Golf Club in high esteem. In a speech delivered on the Wake Robin Golf Club’s Sixty-fifth Anniversary in 2002, she stated that a “major factor in the longevity of the Club is the members’ reverence of God. I believe that the good Lord sent golf to keep us out of trouble. I feel blessed to be able to play the game.”

Elizabeth W. Brabble. Photograph courtesy of the African American Golfer’s Digest.
Thelma Cowans
United Golfers Association National Open Champion

There is fragmentary biographical information on the life of Thelma McTyre Cowans. She and her sister Theresa McTyre Howell were born in Atlanta, Georgia. They became part of the cadre of exceptional women golfers from the Midwestern cities of Detroit, Chicago, and Indianapolis who competed annually in the UGA Women's Open. Cowans was talented enough to play all over the United States, as is documented by her first and second place finishes. She was a formidable golf opponent. Her golf feats are surpassed only by Ann Gregory, Ethel Funches, and Lucy Williams Mitchum. Cowans moved to the Los Angeles area in the fifties and played as a member of the Los Angeles Vernondale Women's Golf Club.

As one of the most competitive women on the UGA circuit, Cowans won the National Women’s Open four times:

- 1947 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 1949 in Detroit, Michigan
- 1954 in Dallas, Texas
- 1955 in Detroit, Michigan

Thelma Cowans was elected to the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1971.

Ethel Funches
United Golfers Association National Open Champion

Ethel Funches was born in Owens, South Carolina, but she spent her adult life in Washington, D.C. Her husband introduced her to the game of golf, and she soon displayed the talent of a champion. Ethel Funches was so captivated by the sport that she joined the Wake Robin Golf Club, in 1943, to focus on competitive matches. She honed her skills as she set her goals to become the champion.

She won many of the Wake Robin Golf Club Championships and then ventured out to win other regional events, including the coveted UGA Women’s Open Championship title.


Ethel Funches also won the UGA National Women’s Open seven times, beginning in 1959 and continuing through 1960, 1963, 1967, 1968, 1969, and 1973. This record of seven UGA Open title wins was to last fourteen years.
Although Ethel Funches had captured many of the local, regional, and national titles, she acquiesced to play on her own well-known golf turf as an amateur among African Americans. Ethel Funches was elected to the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1970.

**Althea Gibson**

*Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour*

Althea Gibson was born on August 25, 1927, in Silver, South Carolina. She was the eldest child of Daniel and Annie Gibson. She graduated from Florida A & M College with a degree in Physical Education.

Gibson is a tennis legend with many championship wins. She was the first African American to win the British Wimbledon and the United States National Open Championship twice in a row. After retiring from the tennis circuit in 1958, Gibson focused her attention on golf.4–7

In 1963, Gibson earned an LPGA tour card to launch her professional golf career. Her scoring average dropped from 84 to 77 per eighteen holes, with grueling practice and determination. Even as a member of the tour, Gibson was
denied the opportunity to play in many tournaments because of the “no coloreds” policy at the country club venues. By 1966, her scoring average was 74. The highlight of her 1966 season was a score of 68 to break the course record at the Pleasant Valley Country Club in Sutton, Massachusetts.

Although Gibson had to take out bank loans to finance her new found career, she was determined to remain on the LPGA Tour. However, from 1967 to 1970, she did not finish a season among the top ten players, either in money or in scoring average.

By 1971, after seven years on the LPGA Tour, Gibson retired because her expenses far exceeded her earnings. Would she have become a legend in golf if she had secured some permanent sponsors?
After breaking the color barrier for the second time, Gibson found herself in a quandary of giving up a promising career that she loved, but could not support her financially. She opted to get a “real” job to support her needs and to repay the bank loans.

Althea Gibson finally retired from all athletic activities in 1992. She had given her best to the public. Maybe she could now devote quality time to her dream of starting a sports academy for young athletes to follow in her footsteps.

She is an inductee in several Halls of Fame (see below), but has not been honored by any of the Black golf Halls of Fame:

- Black Athletes Hall of Fame
- Florida State Hall of Fame
- International Hall of Fame
- National Black Sports & Entertainment Hall of Fame
- National Lawn Tennis Hall of Fame
- South Carolina Athletic Hall of Fame
- Women’s Sports Foundation Hall of Fame
- Tennis Hall of Fame
- World Sports Hall of Fame

The other honors include the following:

- Being the first African American athlete to be honored with a ticker tape parade in New York City
- Twice selected the Associated Press Athlete of the Year
- Twice selected as the Babe Didrikson Zaharias Athlete of the Year
- Time Magazine cover appearance (twice)
- Sports Illustrated cover appearance

She is also the author of two books:

- I Always Wanted to Be Somebody (her earlier life, including tennis)
- So Much to Live For (trying to cope with life and playing golf)

Althea Gibson died as an icon of grace, serenity, and integrity on Sunday, September 28, 2003, in East Orange, New Jersey. She played the game of life with dignity, claiming no special rules for herself, nor being in conflict about being an African American woman athlete.

For the first time, Althea Gibson was posthumously honored by the Black community as a golfer and inducted into the 2005 Inaugural African American Golfers Hall of Fame. The National Black Golf Hall of Fame inducted Gibson as an honoree in 2007.
Ann Gregory
United States Golf Association Amateur Golf Pioneer

Ann Moore was born to Henry and Myra Moore in Aberdeen, Mississippi. She married LeRoy Percy Gregory and lived as an adult in Gary, Indiana. Her husband introduced her to the game of golf. While he was serving in the military in the 1940s, his wife Ann Gregory developed her skills for the game. She was coached by Calvin Ingraham and became a member of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club in 1945.

Mrs. Ann Gregory was the consummate amateur golfer. During a career that spanned fifty years, she won over 300 sanctioned golf tournaments and was labeled the “Queen of Negro Golf.” In relation to wins on tour, she is comparable to and surpasses

Kathy Wentworth, LPGA Tour, eighty-eight wins
Sam Snead, PGA Tour, eighty-one wins
Jack Nicklaus, PGA Tour, seventy-one wins

Eleanor Whalen, Patty Berg, and Althea Gibson celebrate their induction into the newly created Women’s Sports Hall of Fame in New York City, September 16, 1980. Photograph used by permission of CORBIS.
Among Gregory’s golf accomplishments are many “firsts”:

1947—first African American woman to play the Big Gleason Golf Course, Gary, Indiana
1950—first African American woman to play the All American Golf Invitational at the Tam O’ Shanter Golf Club, Chicago, Illinois
1956—first African American woman to play in the USGA Women’s Amateur, Meridian Hills Golf Club, Indianapolis, Indiana
1959—first African American woman to play in the USGA Women’s Amateur, Congressional Golf Club, Bethesda, Maryland
1960—first African American woman to play in the United States Golf Association Women’s Amateur, Southern Hills Golf Club, Tulsa, Oklahoma
1971—first African American woman to play in the USGA Senior Women’s Amateur, Sea Island, Georgia
1989—first African American woman to win a gold medal at the United States National Senior Olympics

Mrs. Gregory suffered much indignation when competing in the USGA Women’s Amateur events against the white competitors. Some of the affronts included:

Being barred from access to white-owned hotels and eating establishments during many of the United States Golf Association tournaments
Being denied entry to the players’ banquet at the Congressional Country Club, after the conclusion of the 1959 championship
Being mistaken for a maid at the 1963 championship

Mrs. Gregory took each form of exclusion and acts of racism in stride by putting the onus on the misguided ignorance of the offender. She was inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1966. She was also posthumously inducted into the 2006 African American Golfers Hall of Fame. With such a spectacular amateur golf career, Mrs. Gregory deserves a place in the Women’s Sports Foundation Hall of Fame and, especially, the World Golf Hall of Fame in St. Augustine, Florida.

Mrs. Gregory broke many records within the United Golfers Association and was the dominating force that integrated the United States Golf Association Women’s Amateur arena. She exhibited her gifts with amazing tolerance and grace that went well beyond color lines of both the black and white golf worlds.

One day the world will acknowledge Mrs. Gregory as the first-class amateur who took her game to the highest level in golf. On that day, she will not carry the label of being “the first African American who . . . ”; she will be identified and honored as “Ann Gregory, the American woman golfer with exceptional talents, who gave her best performances for the love of the game.”

Maggie Hathaway
Golf Civil Rights Activist

Maggie Hathaway had already been involved in protesting institutionalized discriminatory practices before becoming a golf activist. She was known as “Militant
Maggie" for picketing any group or institution that was viewed as racist. She picketed the MGM film industry for denying Blacks and minorities access to the dining-room facilities. The Screen Actors Guild was a target because Blacks and minorities were screened for roles in separate places, away from the lots. After resolving these issues, she turned her attention to golf.

Maggie Hathaway’s interest in golf began in 1955, when she was challenged to hit a ball by Joe Louis. Soon her scoring average was in the mid-eighties. Her first big integration fight was with the county-supported Western Avenue Women’s Golf Club when she was denied membership. In 1960, she organized the Minority Association of Golfers (MAG) to advocate for minorities to secure meaningful golf-related employment. Ms. Hathaway became the one woman activist with the goals of integrating the public golf courses of Los Angeles and expanding the game.

As a columnist for the Los Angeles Sentinel, Hathaway was able to attack racial issues, such as the PGA’s “white only” clause, as they impacted on the livelihood of African American male golfers. She picketed the Fox Hill Golf Course until players like Bill Spiller, Charlie Sifford, and Lee Elder were allowed to play. This venue gave them opportunities to practice their skills on a good course with pristine PGA-rated conditions.

In 1975, Ms. Hathaway petitioned for Lee Elder to be invited to play in the Masters Tournament. As a result, she became the first African American reporter to cover the event walking inside of the ropes.

She was very vocal about the racial inequalities suffered by African Americans. Hathaway organized an NAACP chapter in Hollywood, California, and was instrumental in developing the Image Awards. She was also a member of the Vernondale and Vernoncrest Golf Clubs established by Mrs. Mae Crowder. Although she was called “Militant Maggie” because of her position on civil rights, she always had the time to teach junior golfers. In recognition of her contributions to the youth, the County Par 3 Golf Course in Jesse Owens Park was renamed the “Maggie Hathaway Golf Course.” This golf course, in May 2003, was the first facility in Los Angeles County to become a part of the World Golf Foundation “First Tee” program. Ms. Hathaway was inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame in 1994.

Phyllis Meekins

Ladies Professional Golf Association Instructor, PGM Golf Clinics

Phyllis Meekins was born in Orange, Virginia. She obtained her undergraduate degree from Virginia State University and did graduate work at Drexel Uni-
versity. She established her adult family life in Philadelphia, where she pursued a career path as a United States civil servant.

Meekins’ interest in golf started around 1960 when she began to play competitively in the Philadelphia area. She won the UGA Senior Women’s Tournament title in 1969. Her proclivity for the game prompted her to develop junior golf programs in 1973.

By 1980, Meekins had become a certified LPGA golf instructor and established her own PGM Golf Clinics. The primary purpose of her clinic is to provide an opportunity for children to become responsible athletes through the mastery of golf. At the same time, Meekins became the United Golfers Association/Eastern Golf Association Chair of their Handicap System.

Meekins has been honored by the National Golf Foundation for her junior golf clinic programs. The Phyllis G. Meekins Scholarship was established in 2006 by the LPGA to honor her memory. The first LPGA administered scholarship is to be awarded in 2007. She was inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1984.

**Renee Powell**

*Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour*

Renee Powell was born in Canton, Ohio, to William and Marcella Powell. Her interest in golf began as early as when she was three-years old. Her father, William Powell, the architect and owner of the Clearview Golf Club, coached her.

Powell received her education at Ohio State University, where she became the first woman of color to captain the ladies golf team. Her other amateur accomplishments are

- UGA Minority Junior title
- 6th City (Cleveland, OH) title
- Northeastern Ohio Junior title
- UGA National Open Women’s title

Powell joined the LPGA and played 250 tournaments between 1967 and 1980. Her career path has taken her to Australia, the Far East, Europe, and Africa, where she has conducted golf tournaments for the USO and the State Department.

She finally returned to her roots as the Director of Golf at the Clearview Golf Club in Canton, Ohio. Powell also lends her administrative and managerial expertise to the USGA Girls Junior Golf Committee; she is the Program and Development Consultant for the First Tee Program.
Powell has received the following accolades for her contributions to the game of golf:

1986—National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame Inductee
1991—Dr. Martin Luther King ‘Drum Major’ Award
1997—PGA Tour Card Walker Award
1999—LPGA Budget Service Award
1999—LPGA T&CP Division, Honorary Member
2002—Executive Women Golf Association Leadership Award
2003—PGA First Lady of Golf Award
2006—National Black Golf Hall of Fame Inductee
2007—African American Golfers Hall of Fame Inductee

**Carrie P. Russell**

*Ladies Professional Golf Association Class A Teaching Professional*

Carrie P. Russell was born in Berlin, Maryland. She earned a bachelor of science degree from Delaware State College, and a masters in education from West Chester State College.

Mrs. Russell became the first African American woman to earn a Class A membership in the Ladies Professional Golf Association Teaching Division, in 1971. She served as President of the LPGA Northeast Teaching Section from 1976 to 1978, when the membership was divided into five geographic sections.

Mrs. Russell was also an instructor at Delaware State College and a consultant with the National Golf Foundation. Interestingly, she found time to coach the college men’s golf team from 1976 to 1978 and 1981 and to coach the women’s basketball team from 1976 to 1980. Mrs. Carrie P. Russell was inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1991.

**Winifred E. Stanford**

*Historian, Wake Robin Golf Club*

“Winnie” Stanford, as she is affectionately known, has been an avid golfer and supporter of African American women in golf for fifty-five years. Her leadership positions and memberships in various golf associations speak to her devotion in promoting the sport among African American women.

Mrs. Stanford is a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she was a former member and past president of the Green’s Ladies Golf Club. She relocated to the Washington metropolitan area in 1970 and soon became a member of the Wake Robin Golf Club.
Robin Golf Club, the oldest known African American women's golf club in America. She has served in many capacities at the Wake Robin Golf Club, including president and its renowned historian. Mrs. Stanford was also very active with the Eastern and United Golfers Associations. She is the widow of the late Maxwell C. Stanford, who held the office of president in both the EGA and the UGA; he was also a founder of the Freeway Country Club.
Mrs. Stanford, a longtime resident of Suitland, Maryland, is now committed to helping a larger community through her active involvement in the church and through drawing on her past as a volunteer in the Maryland Public School System. Her dedication is also evident in her forty-two years of government service at the Department of the Army and the Department of Justice. Mrs. Stanford continues to promote golf as the hostess of the Winnie Stanford Open Golf Event for Ladies at the Shenvalee Golf Resort in New Market, Virginia.
Rare Birds

The women selected in this chapter are very rare in the golf community. There are many women who are not mentioned or accounted for, but the biographies seek to represent all of them. In many cases, the summary information is sparse and very limited in scope. The biographies tend to portray the active role that the women have taken in their golf careers. They reveal the roles of women presently involved in perpetuating the history of the African American woman in golf. These women have taken their talent to the next level, and they have grown within the game.

Each woman demonstrates how she has soared well beyond the established boundaries of the status quo. Each one visualized a dream and pursued the dream until it became reality. Each one, drawing on a strong sense of identity and self-determination, persevered through moments of turmoil, ridicule, and exclusion. Marie Thompson (Jones) set the precedent, and the women of the Wake Robin Golf Club and the Chicago Women’s Golf Club cemented the foundations. Ann Gregory and Althea Gibson toppled the racial barriers, and many others took up the causes and issues of the times. They were committed to solving the problems of discrimination, exclusion, and financial burdens so that they could be in a position to provide training facilities and opportunities for success to others in the sport of golf.

The growth potential now rests upon the shoulders of the African American woman golfer who wants her achievements documented as part of the history of the game. She must be committed to the game, willing to pay the price, and to put in the effort to be the best. Like the women of yesteryear, she must have the resolve to win the title and the trophy. In order to continue the crusade, the
African American woman golfer has to assume an active role and become a part of what W. E. B. DuBois designated the “Talented Tenth.”

“. . . The Talented Tenth stand conspicuously [above] the best of their time.”

The Talented Tenth is represented by

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<th>Dara Broadus</th>
<th>Pearl Carey</th>
<th>Jean Miller Colbert</th>
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<td>Debert Cook</td>
<td>Nakia Davis</td>
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<td>Anne Dunovant</td>
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The Talented Tenth

**Dara Broadus**

*FUTURES Golf Tour*

Dara Broadus was born in Atlanta, Georgia. She graduated from Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, and she was part of the Paladins team that won the 1998 Southern Conference Championship. She was the top individual golfer on the team.

Dara Broadus decided to become a professional golfer in 2001 and joined the FUTURES Golf Tour in January 2002. Her rookie year, during which she competed in fourteen events, began in April 2002. She achieved success at the 2002 Capital Regions Futures Classic in Albany, New York, and also at the 2002 Green Mountain Futures Golf Classic in Killington, Vermont. In addition, she also qualified for the 2002 United States Golf Association Women’s Open.

Since her freshman year, Ms. Broadus has continually sharpened her skills on the FUTURES Tour and in various other tournaments around the country. She is also engaged in several community activities that include a youth-development program using the game of golf as a blueprint for the actualization of life skills. Dara Broadus is destined to rise to the next level—the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour.

**Pearl M. Carey**

*President, Western States Golf Association*

The Western States Golf Association (WSGA) was organized in 1953 to encompass all of the fragmentary African American golf clubs on the West Coast.
Mary Broadway, Jean Miller Colbert, and Julia Patterson. Photograph courtesy of the Wake Robin Golf Club Archives.
The clubs included golfers from Arizona, California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. The function of this Association was to unite the clubs so that their political and economical powers could be strengthened to pursue common goals.

Eighteen years later, Pearl M. Carey was elected and served as the first woman president for three terms, from 1977 to 1981. Carey brought about a renaissance to the Association during her tenure. Foremost on her agenda were

1. To rejuvenate the Junior Golf Program
2. To increase the scholarship monies to $1,000 per recipient
3. To establish an Annual Junior Golf Championship
4. To revitalize the Women’s Golf Program
5. To create a WSGA standardized guide for coordinating both the golf clinics and the rules for directing tournament competitions

Pearl M. Carey achieved all of her goals plus many more. The first Junior Golf Championship was held in 1981. Carey was inducted into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame in 1991 for her dedication to the improvement of the WSGA.

Jean Miller Colbert
Wake Robin Golf Club Champion

It is an honor for any member to win the annual Club Championship Title. Usually, a member wins the title only once. However, this is not the case for the Wake Robin Golf Club member, Jean Miller Colbert. Mrs. Colbert holds a distinctive position among the Wake Robin Golf Club membership as the person with the most Club Championship titles (15).


Mrs. Colbert put a stop to the contest by winning the next four titles consecutively from 1986 to 1989. Elizabeth McNeal won the title in 1990, but Mrs. Colbert regained it again the next year. A newcomer, Shaun Jackson, won the title in 1992.

Thereafter, Mrs. Jean Miller Colbert won the Wake Robin Golf Club Championship Title for seven consecutive years, from 1993 to 1999. Elizabeth McNeal prevailed in 2000, but Jean Miller Colbert once again recaptured the title the next year, in 2001.
Debert Coletta Cook, CMP
Publisher, African American Golfer’s Digest

Ms. Cook launched the African American Golfer’s Digest, a nationally distributed publication, in March 2003. The Digest features news, tips, and activities in the “soulful” world of golf. The African American Golfer’s Digest, the only print publication of its kind in the United States, is subscription based, with a controlled circulation of over 80,000 readers each quarter and an added distribution of 250 African American-focused events around the country. The magazine has been profiled in Black Enterprise, Ebony, The Network Journal, Crain’s New York Business, The New York Amsterdam News, and others.

Event Planners Plus! was founded in 1998. The company specializes in corporate and small business meeting management services. Ms. Cook has certification in meeting planning from the Convention Industry Council. Some of the Event Planners Plus! clients have included The National African-American Insurance

Ms. Cook is a native of West Virginia and grew up in Ohio, after which she relocated to New York in 1988. She holds various degrees, including a Masters in Liberal Arts from the City University of New York (CUNY). She has also taught African American Music and Art History as an adjunct professor at the South Bronx Campus of the College of New Rochelle, Bronx, New York.

Ms. Cook has professional memberships in numerous organizations, such as the New York/New Jersey Minority Purchasing Council and the Black Americans in Publishing. She was selected as the 2003 recipient of the Afro-American Chamber of Commerce Business Leader of the Year Award from Westchester and Rockland Counties. In 2004, Ms. Cook was honored with the Pioneer Award from the Inner City Youth Golfer’s Association of West Palm Beach, Florida.

**Nakia Davis**

*FUTURES Golf Tour*

Nakia Davis was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. She obtained her education at Vanderbilt University and graduated with a degree in economics. She exhibited her golf skills early by not only becoming a four-time winner of the Louisiana Girls State Championship, but also the 1991 Minority Golfers Honoree and the 1992 Sugar Bowl Amateur Athlete of the Month Award winner.

Her talents were well received at Vanderbilt, where she was the six-time Top Individual Golfer. She was also the first African American female to play on a Southeastern Conference team, in 1993. Davis declared her intentions to become a professional in 1996 and immediately joined the FUTURES Golf Tour on June 18, 1996.

Davis has played in forty-seven events since her debut to 2000. Her best finish was to tie for eleventh place at the 1998 JA/Anheuser Bush Futures Charity Golf Classic in Forsyth, Illinois. The swing of Nakia Davis is the model for the Microsoft “Link 2001” Video Computer Golf Game.

**Barbara A. Douglas**

*Golf Programs Administrator*

The career path of Barbara A. Douglas was as an administrator with the computer giant, IBM, where she held various executive positions with responsibilities in human resources, community relations and employee managerial development.
In 1990 Ms. Douglas qualified for the United States Golf Association Women’s Public Links Tournament, held at Flanders, New Jersey. She was invited to become a member of the United States Golf Association Women’s Amateur Public Links Committee in 1992.

Since 1992 Ms. Douglas has bought her corporate experiences and organizational skills to the United States Golf Association. She has served the Association as Chair of the Women’s Amateur Public Links Championship, as Chair of the Section Qualifying Committee, and as Chair of the Women’s Regional Affairs Committee. She is a current member of the Women’s Strategic Planning Committee, International Team Selection Committee, and the Future Sites Committee. In addition, Ms. Douglas chairs the Women’s Open Format Committee, and is the current 2007 Vice-Chair of the Women’s Committee.

Even with all of the United States Golf Association responsibilities, Ms. Douglas was the ideal candidate to be elected Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer of the National Minority Golf Foundation (NMGF) in 1997. She served as president of the Foundation from 1999 to 2005.

Several of the objectives of the National Minority Golf Foundation are

1. To promote opportunities for career development in the golf industry
2. To provide educational and competitive events via the Junior Golf Initiative

The programs encourage the youth to consider golf as a career alternative, to train and prepare to accomplish business goals. In addition, the youth are exposed to the rules and regulations governing the venues in golf competitions.

Ms. Barbara Douglas continues to be involved in various golf programs. She is the 2007 elected president of the Junior Golf Association of Arizona. She also serves as a member on the Boards of the LPGA Safeway International, Banner Health Golf Council, Arizona Golf Association, Executive Women’s Golf Association, Golf Course Superintendents Association Diversity Council, National Minority College Golf Scholarship Fund, and *Golf for Women* magazine.

Ms. Douglas is an innovator in the realm of golf in that she has donated her administrative skills and expertise to the growth of the game to the amateur sector, to the minority sector, and to the youth sector.

*Anne Dunovant*

*National Black Golf Hall of Fame*

Anne Pegues Dunovant was born in Chesterfield, South Carolina, to Arthur and Daisy Myers Pegues. She attended and completed studies at New York
University with a computer science major. She married Harold Dunovant in 1962 and toured with him before the birth of their sons. They finally settled in Charlotte, North Carolina.

After the death of her husband, a renowned PGA golf professional, Anne became the Director of the National Black Golf Hall of Fame, along with her son Jeff, who is also a PGA golf professional. The purpose for the establishment of the Hall of Fame is to recognize and honor the contributions of Black golfers and those who have worked extensively to promote golf in the Black community.

The National Black Golf Hall of Fame was founded by Harold Dunovant in 1986. The Hall of Fame tournament began in Greensboro, North Carolina, and was held there for seventeen years. The seventeenth year of the tournament was held in memory of Mr. Dunovant, who had made preparations for it before his death. The tournament has now been joined by the Department of Parks and Recreation of Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, North Carolina, and it has moved to the Renaissance Golf Course in Charlotte, North Carolina.
Reneé Fluker, a native of Detroit, Michigan, is the Founder and Director of the Midnight Golf Program. Fluker is a graduate of Wayne State University, where she earned a Bachelor of Art in sociology. Her son, Jason Malone, a graduate of Loyola University, provided her with the impetus to establish the Midnight Golf Program.

The Midnight Golf League is patterned after the popular and successful Midnight Basketball League. The program serves inner-city youngsters between the ages of seventeen to twenty-two years. This population, often described as the “lost generation,” is in dire need of mentoring, resources, and exposure to positive life experiences. The Midnight Golf Program has created an opportunity to transform their lives.

The mission is to engage young adults in the game of golf and to foster life-skills development that will impact their lives positively. The program is designed, through the discipline of golf, to advance their intellectual development, physical

Reneé Fluker. Photograph courtesy of R. Fluker.
well-being, academic achievement, and employment opportunities; it is also designed to enhance their socialization. The participants must attend a core of ten workshops that include, among other things:

- Social etiquette
- Conflict resolution
- Financial literacy
- Peer/family relationships
- Accessing community resources

The expected results are that the participants will develop a personal commitment to critical thinking and to acquiring cognitive behavioral skills. These decision-making qualities will encourage them to expand their life choices, to become more self-sufficient, and to make viable contributions to the community. The Midnight Golf Program is so successful in Detroit that the Professional Golf Association (PGA) and community leaders are developing plans to start similar programs in Atlanta, Philadelphia, and other cities in Minnesota.

Reneé Fluker is the Housing/Energy Coordinator for the Director’s Office of the Wayne County Family Independence Agency (FIA), in addition to holding responsibilities in the Midnight Golf Program. Ms. Fluker has been inducted into the 2005 Inaugural African American Golfers Hall of Fame.

**Rose Harper-elder**

*President, The Grass Ceiling, Inc.*

Rose Harper was born in Washington, D.C. Her interest in golf began as an amateur playing in the United Golfers Association (UGA) tournaments. She actively played in the women’s division until the mid-seventies.

The career path of Harper-elder lay in business management. She obtained her training in contract negotiations, finance, and public relations from Howard University, the Wharton School of Business, and the Yale School of Management.

She quickly applied these skills to the business affairs of golf professionals on the UGA circuit and the PGA Tour. She soon opened her first management company in the sixties—Rose Elder and Associates—which dealt with contracts, exhibitions, endorsements, and tournament management.

Today, Rose Harper-elder has grown as an entrepreneur, business executive, and philanthropist. Her company—The Grass Ceiling, Inc.—is a public relations and management organization that “advances the executive and self-development goals of aspiring and veteran professionals through the game of golf.”
**Gladys M. Lee**  
*Founder, Roaring Lambs International Junior Golf Academy*

Gladys M. Lee founded Roaring Lambs International Junior Golf Academy, a four-level comprehensive junior program. The curriculum, inclusive of golf training, teaches life skills to multi-ethnic children aged seven to seventeen. The program has served over 1,000 youth since its inception, and it has been instrumental in assisting youth obtain college scholarships.

Ms. Lee is the Texas Chapter Director of the United Global Federation of Golfers (UGFG) in America. The UGFG activities include recruiting, monitoring, and mentoring youth and adult golfers. The UGFG also develops partnerships with local golf courses and organizations for youth golf lessons and tournaments. Ms. Lee is the golf instructor for a six-week summer program at Tarrant County College.

Ms. Lee has received numerous awards and certifications, such as the following: Outstanding Young Women of America Recipient (1982); Fort Worth Ladies Champion (1989); Lost Creek Golf Club Ladies Champion (1989–1990); Woodhaven Country Club Ladies Champion (1996–1997); United Negro College Fund Ladies Champion (1989–1990); National Minority Scholarship Champion (1993–1995; 2000–2001); National Bar Institute Women’s Champion (2001); Recipient of the Minority Leadership Community Council’s Women (2003); Recipient of the Marion J. Brooks “Living Legend Award” (2003); Fort Worth Black Chamber of Commerce Eagle Award Recipient (2003); and the National Black Golf Hall of Fame inductee for 2003.

**Paula Pearson-Tucker**  
*Duramed Futures Tour*

Paula Pearson-Tucker is Director of Golf for the City of Lauderhill, Florida (1999–2006) and one of the lead coaches at The First Tee Miami and Lauderhill. She is also Executive Director of Fore Life, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, which she cofounded with Football Hall of Fame inductee, Lawrence Taylor, designed to use golf and its life-enhancing skills to keep youth out of the juvenile system. Her commitment to golf is made evident by her involvement in the following:

- Joe Roach Minority Golf Foundation, Miami, Florida
- East Lake Junior Golf Academy, Atlanta, Georgia
- 1997 Tiger Woods Golf Clinic, Browns Mill Golf Course, Atlanta, Georgia
• Project One Cleveland Avenue Junior Golf, Atlanta, Georgia
• Black Enterprise Titlist Junior Golf Clinics, Doral, Florida
• Boys and Girls Club of America Nike Leadership Camps
• Doral/Publix Junior Golf Tournament (Rules Official), Doral, Florida
• Multicultural Golf Association of America Junior Golf Camps, Miami, Florida
• Children With Disabilities Golf Clinics/Special Olympics, Miami, Florida
• St. Croix Junior Golf Association, United States Virgin Islands
• Golf Oriented Leadership Foundation (GOLF), board member since 1999.

Ms. Pearson-Tucker left a fourteen-year career as a licensed broker to pursue her passion in golf. She is currently a member playing on the Duramed FUTURES Tour, as well as a member of the Women’s Senior Golf Tour.
Darlene Stowers has been an athlete most of her life. Besides golf, she was also involved in basketball, track and field, cheerleading, volleyball, and dance. She earned a full four-year basketball scholarship to Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas. She was the first female “All American basketball player” from Texas Southern. Ms. Stowers took her basketball talents to the next level by playing in the Women’s American Basketball Association (WABA) in 1987.

Ms. Stowers began to play golf in 1990, and she has excelled to the level of a tour professional. Her ultimate goal is to play on the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour on a full-time basis. She currently plays part-time in professional tournaments throughout the country via the Duramed FUTURES Tour, the Next Generation Women’s Tour, and Professional Open Events. Her schedule is very hectic because she works full-time, practices every day, competes locally every week, and travels to an event at least once a month.
Her best professional career finishes have been a second place in 2003, 2005, and 2006; a third place in 2004; and a top ten in 2001. Although her schedule keeps her very busy, Ms. Stowers continues to develop her golf skills to fulfill her primary goal of playing on the LPGA Tour. Ms. Stowers asks the question, “Where are our African American Sisters on the Tour?”

**LaRee Pearl Sugg**  
*Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour*

LaRee Pearl Sugg was born in Petersburg, Virginia. At the age of three, her grandfather, Dr. James C. Nelson, exposed her to golf. Dr. Nelson was a professor and a golf coach at Virginia State University. Russell Pike became her coach after she began to take the game seriously.

From 1979 to 1988, Sugg won thirty junior titles and was named Junior All-American four times. She was the recipient of the Amy Alcott Golf Scholarship, and she enrolled at UCLA, where she was a member of their women’s team that won the 1991 NCAA Championship.

After graduating from UCLA with a degree in English, Sugg began to pursue her professional golf career. She obtained her LPGA card in 1995, after honing her skills on the Asian Tour, the European Tour, and the FUTURES Tour. She finished fifteenth in her first LPGA tournament, the Noodles Hawaiian Ladies Open. Her professional coach was Paul McRae.

LaRee Pearl Sugg was often the only African American woman golfer to qualify as a player in the major national tournaments. She qualified as a competitor in the United States Women’s Open six times, from 1995 to 2001. She also qualified for the British Women’s Open four times, from 1992 to 2001. Ms. Sugg is the founder of Golfing for Angels Charity Classic.

The talented tenth . . . must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people.\(^2\)
The Notables

Any female child or woman can look back in amazement at the tenacity of the women who have achieved much in, and made contributions to, the game of golf on the Ladies Professional Golf Tour. However, the same does not apply to the African American woman golfer.

It is documented that the women carved out a small niche in the game of golf. They overcame segregation, poverty, and ridicule to establish their presence in a sport that has denied their existence. In so doing, they made it possible for any person to realize the dream of becoming a part of, and making a contribution to, the playing field.

Following in the footsteps of the pioneers, African American women are anticipated, through their perseverance, to soon succeed. Some examples of the pioneers are as follows:

- 1930—Marie Thompson, first woman to win a United Golfers Association National Open Championship Title.
- 1946—Lucy Williams, first person to win four United Golfers Association National Open Championship Titles.
- 1959—Ann Gregory, first woman to play in a United States Golf Association tournament.
- 1963—Althea Gibson, first woman to become a Ladies Professional Golf Association member.

Table 2 lists the names of the women, with a summary statement of their achievements. All of them represent the past, present, and probably future stalwarts in the history of golf in America.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Able, Ella</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women's Championship, 1934, 1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker, Dorothy R.</td>
<td>Founder, Executive Women's League, 1991</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ball, Cleo</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women's Championship, 1941</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bennett, Debra</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women's Championship, 1976</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadus, Tara</td>
<td>FUTURES Tour Golf Professional, 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, Mary</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women's Championship, 1948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, Paris</td>
<td>First Female UGA Tournament Director, 1948–1958 National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1963</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campbell, Mary</td>
<td>CWGC 5th President, 1947, 1948 National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1966</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carey, Pearl M.</td>
<td>First Female President, Western States Golf Association, 1977–1981 Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame, 1991</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coleman, Abby</td>
<td>National Black Golf Hall of Fame, 2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook, Carol</td>
<td>Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame, 1996</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook, Debert C.</td>
<td>Publisher, African American Golfer’s Digest President, Event Planners Plus!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crowder, Mae</td>
<td>Founder, Vernondale Women’s Golf Club, 1947 Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame, 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis, Nakia</td>
<td>FUTURES Tour Golf Professional, 1996–2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Douglas, Barbara</td>
<td>Director, National Minority Golf Foundation, 1997–2005 Vice-Chair, USGA Women’s Committee, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunovant, Anne</td>
<td>Director, National Black Golf Hall of Fame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earles, Argralia</td>
<td>Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fentress, Lillian</td>
<td>Western Golf Association Hall of Fame, 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluker, Renee’</td>
<td>Founder, Midnight Junior Golf Program African American Golfers Hall of Fame, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fowler, Rhoda</td>
<td>National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funches, Ethel</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 7 times National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Gibson, Althea     | African American Golfers Hall of Fame, 2005  
|                    | National Black Golf Hall of Fame, 2007                                                                                                                                 |
| Gillespie, Vera    | 1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1979                                                                                                                                 |
| Gould, LaJean      | Founder, Women in Golf Foundation  
|                    | African American Golfers Hall of Fame, 2006                                                                                                                                 |
| Green, Doretha     | 1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1984                                                                                                                                 |
| Gregory, Ann       | First African American in a USGA Women’s amateur tournament, 1956  
|                    | 1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 5 times  
|                    | National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1966  
|                    | African American Golfers Hall of Fame, 2006                                                                                                                                 |
| Harper-elder, Rose | Founder, Grass Ceiling Golf Management firm                                                                                                                                 |
| Harris, Helen Webb | Founder, Wake Robin Golf Club, 1937  
|                    | National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1973                                                                                                                                 |
| Hathaway, Maggie   | Founder, Minority Association of Golfers (MAG), 1959  
|                    | Founder, NAACP Image Awards, 1960  
|                    | National Black Golf Hall of Fame, 1994                                                                                                                                 |
| Jackson, Alma      | Western States Golf Hall of Fame, 1991                                                                                                                                 |
| Jenkins, Naomi     | 1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1982, 1983                                                                                                                                 |
| Johnson, Selina    | Founder, Hollywood Golf Institute, Junior Golf Program, 1986  
|                    | African American Golfers Hall of Fame, 2005                                                                                                                                 |
| Jones, Carrie      | 1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1962                                                                                                                                 |
| Kellnudi, Clara    | 1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1974                                                                                                                                 |
| LaCour, Doris      | Founder, The Tee Divas, 1996, Los Angeles, CA                                                                                                                                 |
| Lawson, Eleanor    | National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1976                                                                                                                                 |
| Lee, Gladys        | National Black Golf Hall of Fame, 2003                                                                                                                                 |
| Little, Joy        | 1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1977                                                                                                                                 |
| Marbury, Diane     | Western States Golf Hall of Fame, 1987                                                                                                                                 |
| Meekins, Phyllis   | National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1984                                                                                                                                 |
| Merriweather, Ramona| Curator, Epochs of Courage Golf Museum                                                                                                                                 |
| Mitchum, Lucy W    | 1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1932, 1936, 1937, 1946                                                                                                                                 |
| Moye, Melnee       | 1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1938                                                                                                                                 |
| Nelson, Jeanette   | National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1963                                                                                                                                 |

(Continued)
Table 2.  Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O'Chier, Exie</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1970, 1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pearson-Tucker, Paula</td>
<td>FUTURES Tour Golf Professional, 2004–present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powell, Renee</td>
<td>National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1986</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>National Black Golf Hall of Fame, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American Golfers Hall of Fame, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pugh, Vernette</td>
<td>National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason, Ella</td>
<td>Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhodes-White, Peggy</td>
<td>African American Golfers Hall of Fame, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, Anna Black</td>
<td>Founder, Chicago Women’s Golf Club, 1937</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Founder, National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1962</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russell, Carrie</td>
<td>National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanford, Mercedes</td>
<td>Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame, 1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sawyer, Lorraine</td>
<td>Founder, Green Ladies Golf Association, 1954</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siler, Julia</td>
<td>National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, Sarah</td>
<td>1st WRGC Championship, 1937, 1938, 1940, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speedy, Nettie G.</td>
<td>First African American woman to play golf in Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford, Winifred</td>
<td>WRGC Historian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart, Alice</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart, Ernestine</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stokien, Laurie</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1975</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st WRGC Championship, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1976</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stowers, Darlene</td>
<td>FUTURES Tour, 1999–present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stringer, Wilhelmenia</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1981</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terrell, Ethel</td>
<td>1st WRGC Championship, 1939, 1941, 1943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thompson, Marie</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1930, 1931</td>
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<td>Thornton, Eoline</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1951</td>
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<td>Truitt, Mary</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1972</td>
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<td>Turner, Vernice</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1958, 1961,</td>
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<td>Williams, Agnes</td>
<td>National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1967</td>
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<td>Williams, Ethel</td>
<td>National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame, 1975</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Geneva</td>
<td>1st UGA National Open Women’s Championship, 1939, 1940</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, Juanita</td>
<td>Founder, Ebony Ladies Golf Association, 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodyard, Mary L.</td>
<td>Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame, 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young, Wilhelmenia</td>
<td>National Black Golf Hall of Fame, 2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important to pay homage to the women who have earned a modicum of success as United Golfers Association Open champions, or club champions, or program innovators, or Hall of Fame inductees within the African American golf community. The notables are representative of many women golfers identified from 1930 to the present.

- Thirty-eight women earned the respect of their peers and were inducted into one or more of the Halls of Fame (1961–2006).
- Twenty-nine women have won one or more of the United Golfers Open Women's Championships (1930–1984).
- Eighteen women established innovative programs that have exposed the youth and women to the game (1937–present).
- Several women are currently pursuing careers as LPGA or FUTURES Tour professional golfers.

So when the question is asked, “Are there any famous African American women golfers?” Anyone can answer with pride, “Yes!” And they can present the proof for everyone to see.

There is not enough room to list all the names of the many women who have contributed to the advancement of golf as a tool to develop and to interest
minorities in exploring the game. You know who you are and can relish in the fact that you are included in the legacy of the African American woman golfer.

You are to be commended for being the invisible warrior at a time when no one knew that you existed. You remained on course to complete the tasks to become a part of the history of golf in America.

The Playing Field

The “playing fields” include women who always show up to participate in a tournament. The tournament would be a complete flop if the anticipated playing field does not register for it, or if the pairing quota is missed. Usually, the women do not expect to win, but they show up for the love of the game and to enjoy the festive events associated with the tournament.

These women are not the queen bees of the game. They are the perennial journey women. They are the army of the lesser known players who usually make the queen bees look good in the national and regional arenas. And often they do not receive the recognition they deserve because of all the attention given to the queen bees.

However, a few women may catch a break and win a tournament or two. Therefore, it seems appropriate to take this opportunity to acknowledge some of women who have been in the playing fields of a majority of the United Golfers Association (UGA) National Open Women’s Championships from 1930 to 1991. These women are the following:

Dorothy Abbitt  Adelaide Adams  Victoria Adams  Hazel Bibbs
Blanche Bowman  Mildred Bradley  Effie Brent  Naomi Brock
Gloria Brown  Marguerita Brown  Sadie Caldwell  Vydie Carter
Mozell Clark  Martha Clisby  Florence Coleman  Mary Curtis
Aline Davis  Alice Detroit  Bell Diggs  Pearl Dorn
Agnes Douglas  Estell Flowers  Rachel Flowers  Mozelle Gay
Juanita Goodwin  Elizabeth Grove  Bonita Harvey  Edith Hawkins
Alvia Hazzard  Videlia Hill  Roberta Holland  Dorothea Hooks
Theresa Howell  Clara Hudson  Marian Hudson  Josephine Hughes
Tonya Jackson  Clara Jones  Amelia Lucas  Geneva Lumpin
Marian McGruder  Minnie Miller  Ella Morphis  Allyne Nixon
Laura Osgood  Agnes Parrish  Myrtle Patterson  Vivian Pitts
Grace Price  Sue Quarles1  Nellie Randall  Sarah Rayne
Jerenia Reid  Joyce Robinson  Adrienne Rogers  Mike Saunders
Eloise Simpson  Marie Stewart  Joan Struckles  Gertrude Suber
Catherine Weaver  Nernice Weir  Esther Williams  Evelyn Williams
Hazel Bibbs

Tee Shot is the persona of Russ Cowans, who wrote a weekly column entitled “Down the Fairways” for the Chicago Defender newspaper. Russ Cowans is also the husband of the famous woman golfer, Thelma Cowans. In the column of July 24, 1954, he wrote “the hottest gal on the links . . . is Hazel Bibbs. . . . The little Detroit matron won the Midwestern in Toledo . . . walked away off with top honors in the Sixth City in Cleveland . . . and added the Cotillion Crown to her collection. Hazel, pretty little spouse of Attorney Allen Bibbs, has come along fast . . . and should be a serious threat to the four gals who have ruled the herd since 1949—Thelma Cowans, Ann Gregory, Eoline Thornton, and Alice Stewart.”

Let us go back to 1950 to find the petite wife of Attorney Allen Bibbs. Hazel Bibbs played out of the Detroit Golf Club with Thelma Cowans, Theresa Howell, and Alice Stewart, the wife of the Reverend Carlyle Stewart, the former pastor of the Twin Cities Churches.

These family and club connections must have given the little Hazel Bibbs more confidence as she entered the 1950 Joe Louis Invitational Tournament, a major Detroit golf event. Alice Stewart won the Women’s Championship, and Hazel Bibbs won the first flight honors.

The name of Hazel Bibbs did not appear in the top-ten position again until 1952. This time it was at the Chicago Women’s Golf Club Invitational. As usual, Ann Gregory won the Women’s Championship. Hazel Bibbs of Detroit, wife of Attorney Allen Bibbs, locked in second place in the championship flight.

Eoline Thornton won the 1952 Joe Louis Invitational Women’s Championship, with Mary Brown taking second place and Hazel Bibbs finishing third. By the time Russ Cowans had written the 1954 article, Hazel Bibbs had been in contention at the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship for four years. It was inevitable that she would win three tournaments in a row.

Hazel Bibbs was at the top of her game at the 1964 Sixth City Golf Tournament. Only one person stood in her way. The person was not Thelma Cowans, Mary Brown, Eoline Thornton, or Alice Stewart. She was a seventeen-year-old named Renee Powell of East Canton, Ohio, who walked away with the Sixth City Golf Tournament title and trophy. Hazel Bibbs had to settle for second place in the championship pairing.

Hazel Bibbs was a golfer’s golfer. She was a participant at any given tournament. She was always a competitor in the playing field, and although she did not win a United Golfers Association major championship, she was always a top-ten contender. Hazel Bibbs is a good representative of the playing field.
The Field

The following women represent few in the playing field that got the big break of winning a local or regional tournament, with a one-line media mention:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Event/Region/Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olivia Adams</td>
<td>Chicago Women's Golf Club Championship, 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selma Barbour</td>
<td>Chicago Women's Golf Club Championship, 1959, 1965; Annual Pepsi-Cola Invitational, 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Brown</td>
<td>Maryland State Open, 1941; Maryland Handicap Tournament, 1942</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annette Dennis</td>
<td>Chicago Golf Classic, 1967</td>
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<td>Alice Detroit</td>
<td>Windy City Golf Club Tournament, 1952</td>
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<td>Cassie Donaldson</td>
<td>Twentieth Century Golf Club Tournament, 1954</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazel Foreman</td>
<td>Eastern Golf Association Championship, 1947</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnolia Gambrell</td>
<td>D. C. Recreation Open, 1944</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myrtle Hudgins</td>
<td>Annual Pepsi-Cola Invitational, 1968</td>
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<td>Mattie Hurey</td>
<td>Choi-Settes Invitational, 1967</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaun Jackson</td>
<td>Wake Robin Golf Club Championship, 1992, 1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Jones</td>
<td>Maryland Open, 1941</td>
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<td>Verniece Logan</td>
<td>Wake Robin Golf Club Championship, 1970</td>
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<td>Marie Long</td>
<td>Eastern Golf Association Championship, 1942</td>
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<td>Amelia Lucas</td>
<td>Chicago Women's Golf Club Championship, 1950</td>
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<td>Geneva Lumpkin</td>
<td>Chicago Women's Golf Club Midwest Tournament, 1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Mahone</td>
<td>Chicago Women's Golf Club Midwest Tournament, 1947</td>
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<tr>
<td>Babe Masso</td>
<td>Paramount Golf Club Tournament, 1958</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cora Lee McClinick</td>
<td>First SIAAC Intercollegiate Golf Tournament, 1938</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myrtice McIver</td>
<td>Annual Shriner's Golf Tournament, 1961</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrie Miller</td>
<td>Chicago Women's Golf Club Championship, 1967</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marie Murphy</td>
<td>Tombstone Tournament (Baltimore), 1941</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gail Patton</td>
<td>Chicago Midwest Tournament, 1957</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cecilia Powell</td>
<td>Wake Robin Golf Club Championship, 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grace Price</td>
<td>Sixth City Golf Tournament (Cleveland) 1952</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnolia Reynolds</td>
<td>Wake Robin Golf Club Championship, 1944, 1947</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorcas Riley</td>
<td>Bay Area Club Championship (San Francisco) 1954</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julia Rowell</td>
<td>Annual Minnesota Open, 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debra Terry</td>
<td>Ted Rhodes Amateur Women's Tournament, 1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee Villar</td>
<td>Wake Robin Golf Club Championship, 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeannette Worlds</td>
<td>Detroit Memorial Day Championship, 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eloise Wright</td>
<td>Eastern Golf Association Championship, 1939</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Family Circle

Each athlete has a family circle that is supportive of his or her pursuit to be the best in a sport. The golf family circle is no different and consists of people who are always there for the high achiever. This support system is usually made up of a friend, a sibling, or parents. The following women deserve accolades for providing substantial support to the golf athlete. Vivian Pitts, Theresa Howell, and Vivian Hughes Thorpe assumed roles of life-long friend, cheerleading sister, and parent.

Vivian Pitts: A Friend

Vivian Pitts also personifies the stalwarts in the field of players. Mrs. Pitts, together with Anna Mae Black (Robinson) and Cleo Ball, was one of the original founders of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club. The three were the best of friends both on and off the golf course.

Vivian Pitts was a very competitive golfer who entered most of the local, regional, and national tournaments. It is ironic that she has not been given much credit for her participation in golf. She is often described in the newspapers as “the wife of Major Anderson Pitts, Commander of the Eighth Infantry Regiment, Illinois National Guard.”

Mrs. Pitts won the championship title in the 1936 Midwest Golf Invitational held in Gary, Indiana. Her friend, Cleo Ball, finished second. Some of the other competitors were Geneva Wilson, Anna Mae Black (Robinson), and Aline Davis. Vivian Pitts finished in second place to Cleo Ball at the Chicago Golfer Trophy Club Tournament in 1937. The tournament was held at the Sunset Hills Golf Course.

In 1937, Lucy Williams defended her 1936 United Golfers Association Championship title. Vivian Pitts finished in third place. Pitts also finished second to Cleo Ball in the 1941 United Golfers Association National Open Championship. Cleo Ball defeated Pitts with a score of 7 and 6 in match play. An excellent photograph of Vivian Pitts appeared in the Chicago Defender as she practiced for future tournaments.

Theresa Howell: The Sister

Theresa McTyre Howell and Thelma McTyre Cowans originally played golf out of a club in Atlanta, Georgia. The two of them moved to Michigan and became members of the Detroit Golf Club.

It appears that everyone in the African American golf arena has heard of Thelma McTyre Cowans of Detroit. She was known for her incredible golf game.
and competitive spirit. But not many people knew that she had a sister named Theresa Howell, who traveled with her and also competed in most of the golf tournaments, especially the majors. Theresa Howell possessed a great golf game even though she was just the opposite of Thelma Cowans in demeanor.

Theresa Howell was usually a contender in the national tournaments, where she was most often challenging her sister, Thelma Cowans, for the title and the trophy. Although Mrs. Howell never won a major championship title, her name routinely appeared among the top ten spots within the championship division.

She finished in fourth place to Thelma Cowans in the 1947 United Golfers Association National Open Championship. In the same tournament, she defeated Lucy Williams, a former champion, in the semi-final match, which increased Thelma Cowans’ chances of winning the title.12

Theresa Howell was beaten by Ann Gregory by a score of 5 and 4 in the 1953 United Golfers Association National Open tournament. Howell had defeated Lorraine Sawyer to reach the final championship match. Her sister, Thelma Cowans, was defeated by Ann Gregory, who advanced to the final round.13

By 1952, Thelma Cowans had moved to Los Angeles, where she was playing out of the Vernondale Golf Club. So it was not a surprise when she defeated Eoline Thornton of Los Angeles for the championship title. Thelma Cowans had won her third United Golfers Association National Open Championship. This time, however, Theresa Howell was not in the championship flight.14

Theresa Howell was to vie for the championship title again in 1955. She stood on the brink of winning her first United Golfers Association National Championship title and trophy, but as fate would have it, Thelma McTyre Cowans won the crown for the fourth time. Cowans had defeated Theresa Howell, 6 to 4, and Frances Mays, 4 to 2, to advance to the final round.15

Although Thelma Cowans had relocated to California and Theresa Howell remained in Detroit, the sisters always played in the same tournaments. It did not matter if the tournaments were on the East Coast, Middle America, or the West Coast, but they always competed as rivals. Theresa McTyre Howell continued to be in the tournament mix with Thelma McTyre Cowans. Seemingly, one would intercede for the other to get into position for the championship rounds. If true, then Theresa Howell was the unheralded champion in many of the United Golfers Association National Open tournaments. She was the secretary of the Joe Louis Tournament Committee in 1967.16

Vivian Hughes Thorpe: The Parent

Honor is to be given to the African American woman who may not be a golfer, but who gives support to family members pursuing their dreams in golf.
She is often the unsung hero of the family unit. One such woman of significance who personifies this role is Mrs. Vivian Hughes Thorpe, the matriarch of a golf family.

Mrs. Vivian Hughes married Elbert Thorpe and established their family in Roxboro, North Carolina. She raised twelve children, all in a house on the second fairway of the Roxboro Golf Club, where her husband, Elbert Thorpe, was the greenskeeper. Five of her sons are, or were, active in golf, which they attempted to pursue as a career. Their names were Elbert, Jr., Chuck, Jim, Bill, and Chester, and all of them played on the United Golfers Association (UGA) circuit. They eventually went on to play intermittently on the Professional Golf Association (PGA) and the Champions Tours.

Although Mrs. Thorpe did not play competitive golf, she raised and supported a family that was immersed in the game. She and her husband, Mr. Elbert Thorpe, were honored with a Recognition Award by the National Black Golf Hall of Fame in 1990.

The Nova Star

A nova is a star that suddenly increases its light output tremendously, then fades away to its former obscurity in a few months. This definition describes a group of African American women golfers who burst onto the golf scene like nova stars.

The women in this group are honored so that their achievements in golf history will not be forgotten. Some of them have won at least one major United Golfers Association National Open Championship, yet there is little documentation of it in the annals of golf.

The “gods of golf” smiled upon these women during the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championships, where in which they won the title and the trophy. These nova stars played their best golf on the right course and at the right time to win the UGA major tournament. They were brilliant, flaming stars for a day and just as quickly faded from the memory of the press and the golf world. Their names are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Honoree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Mary Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Eoline Thornton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Alice Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Vernice Turner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Vernice Turner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Carrie Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Exie O’Chier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Exie O’Chier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Mary Truitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Clara Kellnudi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Debra Bennett</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Joy Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Ernestine Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Vera Gillespie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Wilhelmenia Stringer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Naomi Jenkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Naomi Jenkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Doretha Green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Mary Brown**  
*1948 United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

Mary Brown of Erie, Pennsylvania, had her shining moment in Indianapolis, where she defeated Hazel Foreman of Washington, D.C., to win the coveted United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship title and trophy. She was in a stellar field that included Thelma Cowans and Ann Gregory.17

Mary Brown was in contention in the final match in 1949, when Thelma Cowans won the championship.18 A photograph of Mary Brown, Lucy Williams, and Cleo Ball appeared in the *Chicago Defender*; the photograph caption reads “They Top Field Among Women in Golf. Golf has taken a decided step forward in the last five years and one of the reasons for this increase in the interest is the play of several women stars.”19 All three of the women eventually won the major UGA National Open Women’s title.

However, the total career of Mary Brown was not as bright. She finished in third place to the champion Eoline Thornton in the Flint, Michigan, tournament.20 Brown's other big accomplishment was winning the Pennsylvania Open, in which she competed against a host of women stars.21

Mary Brown had high expectations of becoming a multiple national tournament winner. However, she could not quite rise again to the spectacular level of performance she had displayed in winning the 1948 United Golfers Association National Open Championship.

**Eoline Thornton**  
*1951 United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

Eoline Thornton was from the West Coast; in fact, she was from Los Angeles, California. Eoline Thornton found herself in the final group pairing with Ann Gregory in 1950. This was after Thornton had eliminated Thelma Cowans, also of Los Angeles, by 5 to 3 in the semi-final match. Ann Gregory won the United Golfers Association National Open by a score of 4 and 3 to overcome the challenge of Eoline Thornton.22

The big reward for Eoline Thornton came in 1951, when she took Myrtice McIver to the eighteenth hole, for a score of 2 up, to win the United Golfers Association National Open Championship.23 She went on to become a contender in several other tournaments.

In 1952, she captured the Detroit Amateur Golf Club Tournament Championship by defeating Hazel Bibbs and Mary Brown. Eoline Thornton also won the 1952 Fairway Golf Club Championship held in Dayton, Ohio, and she finished third to Ann Gregory in the 1953 Windy City Golf Club Tournament.
Eoline Thornton was also a contender in the 1954 United Golfers Association National Open held in Dallas, Texas. Thornton and Cowans went to the eighteenth hole, matching each other shot for shot in match play. Thelma Cowans finally won by 1 up; this was her third United Golfers Association Championship title. Eoline Thornton never won another major United Golfers Association title. Althea Gibson credits her for encouraging Althea to play golf.

**Alice Stewart**

*1952 United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

Alice Stewart is described in the media as “the wife of Rev. Charles Carelton Stewart pastor of Ebenezer AME Church, or the wife of Rev. Carlyle Stewart, former pastor of Twin Cities Churches.” After her identity was revealed, Alice Stewart set her sights on winning a golf championship. Her quest began at the 1947 Sixth City Golf Association Tournament in Cleveland, Ohio, where Thelma Cowans won the championship. Alice Stewart had the second best score.

In 1950, Mrs. Stewart was the runner-up in the Sixth City Golf Tournament held in Cleveland and the runner-up as well in the Midwestern Golf Tournament in Toledo, Ohio. She finally realized her goal by winning the Joe Louis Invitational title and trophy in August 1950.

Alice Stewart continued to add other tournaments to her win list. She won the Minneapolis Open Championship, in August 1952, by eleven strokes over her opponent, Sgt. Dixon.

Finally, in September 1952, the big day arrives, and the excitement for the final match is overwhelming. Alice Stewart of Detroit brings down the great Ann Gregory in the championship match and realizes her full potential at last. She becomes the reigning United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Champion. She has won the title and the trophy by defeating the famed Ann Gregory, the first to congratulate her.

**Vernice Turner**

*1958 and 1961 United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

Vernice Turner was from a little-known town of Ocean City, New Jersey. She was on a mission to upset the UGA Open Champions, and she accomplished that feat in 1958. Vernice Turner posted the best low score by defeating Myrtle Patterson of New York City, to earn the United Golfers Association Open Women’s Championship. The media report of the tournament results included shot-by-shot descriptions of Wheeler’s performance, but Turner’s victory is summarized very tersely:
“Vernice Turner, Ocean City, NJ, captured top place in the women’s division with a win over Myrtle Patterson, New York.” Also buried in the article is a mention of the junior golf results: “two-time winner Shirley Turner, 17, Detroit . . . and Renee Powell, 12 . . . East Canton, Ohio . . . and Wanita Arvin, 16, Baltimore.”29 It appears the media had already relegated Turner to the one-time-wonder spot.

It was Vernice Turner of Ocean City, New Jersey, who gave the encore performance. She won the 1961 United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship a second time. As a reward for her double titles, the media mentioned her name in a photograph caption entitled “Top on the Links.” The caption reads “Vernice Turner of Ocean City, N. J., two-time victor among the top women players in the land.”30 That is all of the documentation available of this golfer’s accomplishments.

Was she being punished by the press for not being a one-time wonder? Or was Vernice Turner slighted for upsetting the star system established by the press? Ann Gregory, Thelma Cowans, and Ethel Funches were the reigning queens of African American golf from 1947 to 1970.

Carrie Jones

1962 United Golfer Association National Open Champion

The Afro-American newspaper carried an interesting tidbit in the seventh paragraph of an article, speculating on the possible participants in the upcoming 1963 United Golfers Association National Open. There is a reference to Carrie Jones that reads, “The ladies division will be star-studded also. The brightest star will of course be Althea Gibson. NEXT WILL come Mrs. Ethel Funches . . . followed by the defending champion Miss Carrie Jones of Jackson, Mississippi.”31

Exie O’Chier


Exie O’Chier entered the scene in 1967 as the champion of the UGA Midwest District Golf Association Amateur Open held at the Louisville Valley View Country Club. There is a photograph available of Exie O’Chier with Frankie Wyche and Mattie Hurey.32

In 1968, Exie O’Chier finished second to Ann Gregory, who had a runaway victory over the field at the Midwestern Golf Association Amateur Open held at the Rush Lake Hill Golf Course in Detroit.33 Surprisingly, the back-to-back
United Golfers Association National Open victories of Exie O’Chier did not make the front page of the sports section. Instead, her unusual wins were briefly mentioned in the caption of the photograph of the Stroh Brewery Company golf team, which consisted of four men. The caption states that “For a second straight year, Mrs. Exie O’Chier won the national [UGA] women’s championship” (1970, 1971).34

**Mary Truitt**

*1972 United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

The 1972 United Golfers Association National Open Championship was held at the Chevy Chase Golf Course in Maryland. Of the seven photographs on the newspaper page covering the tournament results of the tournament, only one photograph is that of Mary Truitt holding the championship trophy. The women’s results are listed as Mary Truitt, winner, Gloria Brown, winner of the first flight, Mary Curtis, winner of the second flight, and Maxine McCurine, winner of the third flight.35 Mary Truitt was an active member of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club at the time of her win.

**Clara Kellnudi**

*1974 United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

The 1974 United Golfers Association National Open Championship was held in Braintree, Massachusetts, where Clara Kellnudi, from Mashpie, Massachusetts, won the title. Some of the corporate sponsors of the tournament were Gulf Oil, Falstaff Brewing Corporation, American Airlines, and the Greyhound Corporation.36

**Laurie Stokien**

*1975 United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

Laurie Stokien, a member of the Wake Robin Golf Club, won the 1975 United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship that was held in Pine Ridge, Maryland. Miss Stokien was a newcomer to the game of golf, but she competed like a champion nova star.37 However, she never did win another United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship after 1975, but she still competed at the local and regional levels.

**Debra Bennett**

1976 United Golfers Association National Open Champion

Debra Bennett was crowned the United Golfers Association National Open Women's Championship in 1976.38

**Joy Little**

1977 United Golfers Association National Open Champion

The venue for the 1977 United Golfers Association National Open Championship was New Haven, Connecticut. Joy Little won the title and trophy there.39

**Ernestine Stewart**

1978 United Golfers Association National Open Champion

Ernestine Stewart is a member of the Chicago Women's Golf Club. She is also the reigning champion at the 1978 United Golfers Association National Open Championship. The tournament was held in Nassau, Bahamas, and hosted by the Chicago Women's Golf Club.40

**Vera Gillespie**

1979 United Golfers Association National Open Champion

In 1979, the tournament was held in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Vera Gillespie was crowned the United Golfers Association National Open Women's Champion.41

**Wilhelmenia Stringer**

1981 United Golfers Association National Open Champion

The tournament site was back on the mainland in Chicago. Wilhelmenia Stringer won the United Golfers Association National Open Women's Championship in 1981.42

**Naomi Jenkins**

1982 and 1983 United Golfers Association National Open Champion

Naomi Jenkins won the 1982 United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship in Detroit, Michigan. She repeated as champion in the 1983 United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship in Rehobeth, Massachusetts.43
Doretha Green

*1984 United Golfers Association National Open Champion*

Doretha Green was the victor in the 1984 United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship held in Dayton, Ohio.\(^44\)

The Club Member

Two of the perks of joining a women’s club are the camaraderie enjoyed during the weekly matches and the pleasure of playing golf without a critic. It does not matter whether you have a high or low handicap; what matters is being with women who enjoy golf. The following women, all club members, exemplify success at all levels of tournament play—local, regional, and national:

- Ann Gregory, Chicago Women’s Golf Club
- Hazel Foreman, Wake Robin Golf Club
- Elizabeth McNeal, Wake Robin Golf Club
- Lorraine Sawyer, Green’s Ladies Golf Club

Ann Gregory was the prime example of a club member. She resided in Gary, Indiana, but she was a member of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club. She won most of the annual club championships as well as the other local and regional titles. In addition, she won five United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championships. Ann Gregory went on to compete in the United States Golf Association Women Amateur Tournaments. Wherever she played, Ann Gregory represented the Chicago Women’s Golf Club with honor and pride.

Although the documentation is dated, it conveys the idea that if these women could teach themselves to play so well back in the day, then anyone, with the help of a club membership, could do the same in the twenty-first century. It is also advantageous for women to know something about golf, so that they might be able to win invitations to corporate golf outings during business trips. Any African American woman who picks up a golf club and says “I can do this” should be honored.

Hazel Foreman

*Wake Robin Golf Club*

Hazel Foreman played against Lucy Williams, a UGA National Women’s Champion, in the final round of the 1946 United Golfers Association National Women’s Championship. Lucy Williams eventually won the title and trophy, but Hazel Foreman came in second.\(^45\)
The Eastern Golf Association Tournament was held at the South Park Course in Pittsburgh. Hazel Foreman triumphed there over Lorraine Sawyer, of the Green’s Ladies Golf Club, by a score of 3 and 2 in match play.46

In September 1947, Hazel Foreman of Washington, D.C., Lorraine Sawyer of Philadelphia, and Thelma Cowans of Detroit were in contention for the 1947 United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship. Thelma Cowans eventually won the event, with Hazel Foreman coming in third, and Lorraine Sawyer coming in second.47

Over a year, Hazel Foreman primed her game to win a title, but she came in second to a fellow Wake Robin Golf Club member, Sarah Smith, at the D.C. Recreation Department’s Women’s Open in July 1948.48 In 1965, Hazel Foreman came in second to another Wake Robin Golf Club member, Ethel Terrell, at the Howard University “H” Varsity Golf Tournament.49 Although, she never won the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship, she was a Wake Robin Golf Club member. She was no stranger to being in the championship final pairing. Hazel Foreman won the Club championship three times in 1942, 1946, and 1948. Her opponents in the tournaments were the famed Sarah Smith, the four-time champion, and Ethel Terrell, a three-time champion. They had trained Hazel Foreman to take the championship match to the eighteenth hole.

**Elizabeth Rice McNeal**

*Wake Robin Golf Club*

Elizabeth Rice McNeal did not win the 1955 United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship, but she did eliminate Ann Gregory from the championship round by a score of 1 up. McNeal was dropping long-distance putts from 10 to 20 feet away. She took Gregory to the eighteenth hole of the match.50

Elizabeth McNeal always appeared to be a contender, especially in or around the championship round. She was relegated to another second place by Wake Robin Golf Club member, Ethel Funches, in the 1959 United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship.51 Eventually, Elizabeth McNeal won the 1965 Regional 3-Ring Golf Classic. The tournament was held at the Pine Ridge Course in Towson, Maryland.52

When the Wake Robin Golf Club, the Fore Ball Golf Club, the Arlington Divots Golf Club, and the Royal Golf Club sponsored the regional Federal City Golf Open in June of 1970, Elizabeth McNeal, of the Wake Robin Golf Club, walked off with the title and the trophy.53 She knew how to play the champions because she had won the Wake Robin Golf Club Championship ten times over a span of some years.
Elizabeth McNeal had won the club championship four times between 1949 and 1960. Other club members—Ethel Funches, Frances Mays, Laurie Stokien, Verniece Logan, and especially Jean Miller Colbert—interrupted her reign on the championship titles. Elizabeth McNeal was not to be deterred. She won the Wake Robin Golf Club Championship another six times, in 1965, 1979, 1981, 1983, 1985, and 1990.

**Lorraine Sawyer**

*Green's Ladies Golf Club*

Lorraine Sawyer was the founder of the Green's Ladies Golf Club in Philadelphia. She was also a perennial contender in most of the local, regional, and national tournaments. The multiple commitments did not guarantee many victories, but Lorraine Sawyer often appeared as a contender in the championship or first flight. She was in the championship match with Thelma Cowans at the 1947 United Golfers Association National Open tournament, which Thelma Cowans won by a close call, 5 and 2 and Lorraine Sawyer took second place. 54 54

Lorraine Sawyer took one of her best games to the 1948 Eastern Golf Association Tournament, in which she defeated Rosa Morris by a score of 2 and 1 to win the EGA Championship.55 She again competed with Thelma Cowans in the final round of the United Golfers Association National Open in 1954. This time Thelma Cowans won the match by a score of 2 up.56

**The Hall of Fame Inductees**

**Rhoda Fowler**

Rhoda Fowler can be labeled the “Phantom Golfer.” She represents the many women who had their achievement(s) mentioned briefly in a sentence or as a part of fragmented bits of information. It must be reemphasized that women amateur golfers were basically ignored in the arena of golf. They did not have sponsors or equipment contracts for financial support. They had to pay their own entry fees as well as travel and living expenses. Despite these obstacles, Rhoda Fowler was still in the field of golfers at many tournaments.

Rhoda Fowler, thus, would be considered a “roadie” or “groupie” in today’s jargon. She was a member of the New Amsterdam Club in New York City. She was in contention for the 1936 United Golfers Association National Open Championship title, which Lucy Williams of Indianapolis won. Rhoda Fowler also qualified for the championship round in 1941 when Cleo and Pat Ball claimed the United Golfers Association National Tournament. She must have...
been an inspiration to all of the golfers in her era because she was the first woman
to be inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame in 1961
(see Sinnette for photograph of Fowler).57

**Halls of Fame**

It would be remiss not to include the women of the Halls of Fame. To date,
2007, there are 40 women chosen as Hall of Fame inductees. The honor “Hall
of Fame inductee” indicates that the person is extraordinary and in a class by
herself.

The following women met one or more of the listed criteria of excellence to
have been inducted into a Hall of Fame.

**National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame**

*Established 1959*

The following are the inductees in the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of
Fame:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Fowler, Rhoda</td>
<td>No Documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Robinson, Anna</td>
<td>Founder, Chicago Women's Golf Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Brown, Paris</td>
<td>United Golfers Assoc., Tournament Dir.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Nelson, Jeannette</td>
<td>No Documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Siler, Julia</td>
<td>No Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Campbell, Mary</td>
<td>No Documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Gregory, Ann</td>
<td>UGA Women's Champion, 5 times, 1st to play in a USGA Tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Williams, Agnes</td>
<td>Founder, Bob-O-Links Junior Golf Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Funches, Ethel</td>
<td>UGA Women's Champion 7 times</td>
</tr>
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<td>1971</td>
<td>Cowans, Thelma</td>
<td>UGA Women's Champion 5 times</td>
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<td>1973</td>
<td>Harris, Helen</td>
<td>Founder, Wake Robin Golf Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Williams, Ethel</td>
<td>No Documentation</td>
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<td>1976</td>
<td>Lawson, Eleanor</td>
<td>No Documentation</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>Pugh, Vernetta</td>
<td>No Documentation</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>Meekins, Phyllis</td>
<td>EGA, UGA Handicap Director, LPGA T&amp;CP</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Powell, Renee</td>
<td>UGA Champ, LPGA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Russell, Carrie</td>
<td>1st LPGA Teaching Professional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Black Golf Hall of Fame
Established 1986

The following are the inductees in the National Black Golf Hall of Fame:

1. 1994 Hathaway, Maggie  First African American woman golf activist
2. 2000 Coleman, Abby  No documentation
3. 2001 Young, Wilhelmenia  No documentation
5. 2006 Powell, Renee  LPGA/PGA
6. 2007 Gibson, Althea  First LPGA Tour member

The African American woman golfer. Photograph courtesy of Audley Reid, Jr. and Jamie Reid.
Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame

Established 1975

The following are inductees in the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame:

1. 1978 Crowder, Mae Founder, Vernondale/Vernoncrest Golf Clubs
2. 1978 Woodyard, Mary No documentation
3. 1983 Fentress, Lillian No documentation
4. 1987 Marbury, Diane No documentation
5. 1987 Reason, Ella Mae No documentation
6. 1989 Sanford, Mercedes No documentation
7. 1991 Carey, Pearl First female president of WSGA
8. 1991 Jackson, Alma No documentation
9. 1996 Cook, Carol No documentation
10. 2002 Earles, Argralia No documentation
11. 2007 Unknown No documentation

African American Golfers Hall of Fame

Established 2005

The following are inductees in the African American Golfers Hall of Fame:

1. 2005 Fluker, Reneé Founder, Midnight Golf Program
2. 2005 Gibson, Althea First LPGA Tour Member
4. 2006 Gould, LaJean Founder, Women in Golf Foundation
5. 2006 Gregory, Ann Queen of Afro-American Golf
6. 2006 Rhodes-White, Peggy Director, Ted Rhodes Foundation
7. 2007 Powell, Renee LPGA/PGA

The tournaments are over, and the honors, the accolades, the prizes, and the trophies have been awarded. Now everyone must regroup to make plans to enter the tournaments of the future. The twenty-first century is waiting for a continuation of the achievements of the African American woman golfer.
The African American woman golfer has played a definitive role in the game of golf in America. Yet, HER STORY has been omitted in the annals of HIS STORY. The following excerpts are evidence that the African American woman golfer has a story to be told.

**Herstory—1930s**

1930—Marie Thompson enters, and wins, her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship

1931—Marie Thompson wins her second United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship

1932—Lucy Williams wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship

1933—Marie Thompson (Jones) wins her third consecutive Amateur Golf Association Championship

1933—Nettie Speedy, veteran journalist, is honored by flowers showered from an airplane at the United Golfers Association awards ceremonies

1933—Julia Siler wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship

1934—Ella Able wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship

1935—Ella Able wins her second United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship

1936—Lucy Williams wins her second United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1937—The Wake Robin Golf Club is organized in April
1937—The Chicago Women’s Golf Club is organized in November
1937—Lucy Williams wins her third United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1938—Melnée Moye wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1938—Cora McClintick wins the women’s division of the first Black Intercollegiate Golf Tournament held at Tuskegee Institute
1939—Geneva Wilson wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1939—the first 9 holes of Langston Golf Course are opened for play

**Herstory—1940s**

1940—Geneva Wilson wins her second United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1940—The Chicago Women’s Golf Club is the first all-female club to host the United Golfers Association Open Championships, the National Open, and the National Men’s Amateur and National Women’s Amateur Opens
1941—Cleo Ball wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1941—Paris Brown is elected the third vice-president of the United Golfers Association
1941—Marie Thompson (Jones) adds a fourth Amateur Golf Association Championship victory to her collection
1941—Margaret Brown accumulates four honors at the Maryland State Open, the Murphy Cup, the Medalist prize, the Maryland State Open Cup, and the John H. Murphy Trophy
1942—Four members of the Wake Robin Golf Club—Helen Harris, Bonita Harvey, Francis Watkins, and Kelly Snowden—are harassed at the Fairlawn Course located in the Anacostia section of Washington, D.C.
1944—Geneva Wilson, Magnolia Gambrell Frances Hill Watkins, and Julia Siler attempt to qualify for the Tam O’Shanter All-American Golf Tournament
1946—Lucy Williams (Mitchum) captures the Women’s Championship in the first Joe Louis Invitational
1946—Paris Brown is named vice-president of the United Golfers Association for 1947

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1946—Lucy Williams (Mitchum) wins her fourth United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1947—Ann Gregory is invited to play in the All-American Golf Tournament at the Tam O’Shanter in Chicago
1947—Mae Crowder establishes the Vernondale Women’s Golf Club
1947—Thelma Cowans wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1948—Mary Brown wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1948—The first 9 holes of the Clearview Golf Club are opened for play
1949—Thelma Cowans wins her second United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship

**Herstory—1950s**

1950—Ann Gregory wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1951—Eoline Thornton wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1952—Alice Stewart wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1953—The Vernondale Golf Club’s name is changed to the Vernoncrest Golf Club
1953—Ann Gregory wins her second United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1953—Mae Crowder guides the formation of the Western States Golf Association
1953—The Vernoncrest Golf Club becomes a charter member of the Western States Golf Association
1954—Thelma Cowans wins her third United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1954—The Bob-O-Links Junior Golf Program is initiated within the Chicago Women’s Golf Club by Agnes Williams
1954—The Green’s Ladies Golf Association is established by Lorraine Sawyer
1954—The Chicago Women’s Golf Club sponsors the first Walter Speedy Memorial Tournament
1954—Paris Brown is elected as the tournament director of the United Golfers Association
1955—Thelma Cowans wins her fourth United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1955—Langston Golf Course reopens with 18 holes
1956—Alma Arvin is denied her first United Golfers Association National Open Championship when the Tournament Committee defaults on the rules, giving Thelma Cowans her fifth Championship Title
1956—Ann Gregory retires a *Chicago Defender* Three-legged trophy with the Chicago Women’s Golf Club Invitational win
1956—Ann Gregory is the first African American woman golfer to play in the United States Golf Association Women’s Tournament, held at the Meridian Hills Golf Club in Indianapolis, IN
1957—Ann Gregory wins her third United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1958—Vernice Turner wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1959—The National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame is established by Anna Robinson of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club
1959—Ethel Funches wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship

Herstory—1960s

1960—Ann Gregory is denied dinner seating at the players’ banquet after the United States Women’s Amateur Championship is held at the Congressional Golf Club in Bethesda, MD
1960—The Women of the Sixth City Golf Club is organized in Cleveland
1960—Maggie Hathaway organizes the Minority Association of Golfers (MAG) to secure meaningful golf related jobs
1960—Ethel Funches wins her second United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1960—The Choi-Settes Peace Club debuts in Chicago
1960—The Monumental Women’s Auxiliary is formed in Baltimore
1960—Paris Brown is reelected to the position of United Golfers Association tournament director; Anna Mae Robinson is the assistant director
1961—Rhoda Fowler is the first woman to be inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1961—Vernice Turner wins her second United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1962—Anna Robinson is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1962—Maggie Hathaway creates the NAACP 'Image Award' to showcase people with exceptional talent
1962—Carrie Jones wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women's Championship
1963—Ethel Funches wins her third United Golfers Association National Open Women's Championship
1963—Paris Brown is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1963—Jeanette Nelson is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1963—Althea Gibson is the first African American woman to play on the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour (LPGA)
1964—Title Six, or the Civil Rights Act, is passed
1964—Julia Siler is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1964—Renee Powell wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women's Championship
1965—The Debutante Golf Club is formed in Philadelphia
1965—Ann Gregory wins her fourth United Golfers Association National Open Women's Championship
1966—Ann Gregory is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1966—Mary Campbell is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1966—Ann Gregory wins her fifth United Golfers Association National Open Women's Championship
1967—Agnes Williams is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1967—Renee Powell joins the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour
1967—Ethel Funches wins her fourth United Golfers Association National Open Women's Championship
1968—Ethel Funches wins her fifth United Golfers Association National Open Women's Championship
1968—Althea Gibson publishes a book, *So Much to Live For*, telling about her adventures in life and her new found career in golf
1969—Ethel Funches is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1969—Ethel Funches wins her sixth United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship

Herstory—1970s

1970—Exie O’Chier wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1971—Thelma Cowans is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1971—Exie O’Chier wins her second United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1971—Carrie Russell is the first African American to earn a Class A membership in the Ladies Professional Golf Association Teaching Division
1972—Title IX, or the Equal Opportunity in Education Act, is passed to ensure equality in education and sports programs
1972—Mary Truitt wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1973—Ethel Funches wins her seventh United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1973—Helen Harris is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1974—The Ebony Ladies Golf Association is formed in Chicago, the first club with a governing Board of Directors
1974—Clara Kellnudi wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1975—The Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame is created by Frederick Horton
1975—Ethel Williams is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1975—Laurie Stokien wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1976—Carrie Russell begins to serve as president of the LPGA Northeast Teaching Section, a position in which she will continue until 1978
1976—Eleanor Lawson is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1976—Carrie Russell is appointed as a consultant to the National Golf Foundation
1976—Debra Bennett wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1977—Pearl Carey is elected president of the Western States Golf Association
1977—Joy Little wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1978—Mae Crowder, founder of the Vernondale/Vernoncrest Golf Clubs, is the first women inducted into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame
1978—Mary Woodyard, instrumental in nurturing the growth of the Vernoncrest Golf Club, is inducted into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame
1978—Ernestine Stewart wins the United Golfers Association National Open Championship
1978—The second 9 holes of the Clearview Golf Club are opened
1979—Vera Gillespie wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1979—The Bob-O-Links, the junior golf program of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club, celebrates 25 years

Herstory—1980s

1980—Vernette Pugh is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1981—Wilhelmenia Stringer wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1981—Carrie Russell, the first Class A LPGA Instructor, is featured in the book Black Women in Sport.
1982—Naomi Jenkins wins her first United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1983—Naomi Jenkins wins her second United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1983—Lillian Fentress is inducted into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame
1984—Doretha Green wins the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship
1984—Phyllis Meekins is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1986—The National Black Golf Hall of Fame is established by Harold Dunovant
1986—Renee Powell is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1986—The Hollywood Golf Institute for Junior Golfers is opened in Detroit by Selina Johnson
1987—Diane Marbury is inducted into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame
1989—Mercedes Sanford is inducted into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame
1989—Ann Gregory wins a Gold Medal at the United States Senior Olympics
1989—Althea Gibson is featured in the book *I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed the World*

**Herstory—1990s**

1991—Langston Golf Course is put on the National Register of Historic Places
1991—Carrie P. Russell is inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
1991—The Executive Women’s League is formed by Dorothy Baker
1991—Pearl Carey is inducted into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame
1991—Alma Jackson is inducted into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame
1994—Maggie Hathaway is the first woman inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame
1996—The Tee Divas Golf Club is formed on the West Coast by Doris LaCour
1996—Carol Cook is inducted into the Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame

**Herstory—2000s**

2000—Abby Coleman is inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame
2000—Wilhelmenia Young is inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame
2001—Jean Miller Colbert wins her fifteenth Wake Robin Golf Club Championship
2001—The Clearview Golf Club is placed on the National Register of Historic Places
2001—Renée Fluker creates the Midnight Golf Program to save young people from becoming victims of the streets
2002—Argralia Earles is inducted into the Western Sates Golf Association Hall of Fame
2003—The Maggie Hathaway Golf Course becomes a sanctioned “First Tee” facility
2003—Gladys Lee is inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame
2003—The first issue of The African American Golfer’s Digest is published by Debert Cook
2003—Renee Powell is honored by the Professional Golf Association with the PGA’s “First Lady of Golf” Award
2004—The African American Golfers Hall of Fame is established by Malachi Knowles
2004—Althea Gibson’s biography is published posthumously as Born to Win: The Authorized Biography of Althea Gibson
2005—Althea Gibson is recognized as a golfer of note and posthumously inducted into the African American Golfers Hall of Fame
2005—Renée Fluker is inducted into the African American Golfers Hall of Fame
2005—Selina Johnson is inducted into the African American Golfers Hall of Fame
2005—Brandi Seymour is an interviewer on the Golf Channel
2005—Felicia Brown appears as a contestant in the ‘Big Break’ competition aired on the Golf Channel
2006—Andia Winslow receives a sponsor’s exemption to play in a LPGA event
2006—Renee Powell is inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame
2006—Ann Gregory is posthumously inducted into the Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame
2006—LaJean Gould is an inductee into the African American Golfers Hall of Fame
2006—Peggy Rhodes-White, daughter of the legendary Ted Rhodes, is inducted into the African American Golfers Hall of Fame
2007—Althea Gibson is posthumously inducted into the National Black Golf Hall of Fame
2007—Renee Powell is inducted into the African American Golfers Hall of Fame
2007—The Wake Robin Golf Club is celebrating its seventieth year
2007—The Chicago Women’s Golf Club is in its seventieth anniversary year
2007—Debert Cook and the African American Golfer’s Digest celebrate a fourth year of publication.

African American women’s footsteps forward in golf are small in light of the many years of struggle. Perhaps this compilation will pique the interest of those who will continue the search for lost archives of information about African American woman golfers. Maybe all the “gatekeepers” can be convinced to jointly invest their energies, resources, and expertise in finally documenting the true her-story, diagnosing today’s lethargy, and providing positive remedies in pursuit of a viable future for African American woman golfers.

There is no reason we ought to be standing at the beginning of the twenty-first century still pondering the issues of the 1930s.
The metaphorical nineteenth hole is where golfers gather after a round, refueling and rehashing the highlights and lowlights of the round. This is a time for golfers to explain poor scores while others rub it in and emphasize their own playing performance. Final scores are documented, camaraderie mellows, and everyone anticipates the challenge of tomorrow. This, our own nineteenth hole, is no different—so let the complaining and sportswomanship begin!

The amount of frustration in researching the subject of African American women was surprising. After reading five books on “Black Men and Golf History,” it seemed that finding additional information on women would be easy. Despite high expectations that major reference sources would be the gatekeepers of factual and historical information on Black America in toto, it is apparent that the gender gap is very wide spread.

Six sources—Ashe (1998), Dawkins (2000), McDaniel (2000), Kennedy (2000), Robinson (1997), and Sinnette (1998)—carved out a space for women as they deified the male golfers and their careers. The information on the women was condensed into a single chapter or segment that encapsulated the goals and accomplishments of the Wake Robin and Chicago Women’s Golf Clubs and the lives and ambitions of their star power throughout the country. Each author let it be known that women golfers also had some trials and tribulations in their pursuit of the game. It would have been great if the authors could have included more information and complete biographies on female golf pioneers, but they are to be commended for affording any historical coverage to the elusive African American woman golfer. Sadly, it seems as if all of these women’s golf careers ended in the seventies, when the literature’s coverage ends.
A few of these sources are remiss in their treatment of

1. Golf as an index term
2. Althea Gibson’s continuing biography
3. Accurately identifying the first woman on the LPGA Tour
4. Names and biographies of women golfers

The gatekeepers use keywords as entry points to allow or prohibit access to their information or to their creation(s). Some do not identify golf as a sport or an occupation. Only ten sources have Golf as an access point. When the term is used as an entry point, it usually refers to male golfers.

The biography of Althea Gibson appears in nineteen of the twenty-six reference tools. Only six of the nineteen mentioned that she played golf as a professional.

Over thirty women inductees were found in the Golf Halls of Fame, but only two have comprehensive biographies written in the traditional reference tools—Ann Gregory and Renee Powell. The updates should be amended to

1. Include Golf as an entry point to the name of individual women athletes
2. Include Golf, women as an entry point, listing individual athletes’ names
3. Include the available biographies of as many women golfers as possible
4. Redefine the athlete, career, occupation, and sports categories to include Golf, because ‘Golf, Occupation, Not Elsewhere Defined’ is too general. Golf is a sport; Golf is a career path; Golf is an occupation; a Golfer is an athlete
5. The biography of Althea Gibson should be updated to include her career as a golf professional, making known her courage in breaking the color barrier in two sports—tennis and golf—thereby allowing her biography to be indexed under both sports, instead of only tennis.
6. Revise the entry of who was on the LPGA Tour first—Gibson or Powell. Althea Gibson was first, in 1963; Powell was second, in 1967.

The African American reference tools and the books on golf history were reviewed individually for the purpose of obtaining information on women golfers. The intent is not to criticize the resources. Some lack information that was germane to the project, and others had some of the information. When all the resources were used together to garner information on women, the names of
over 100 women were registered. Full biographic entries were available on eleven women:

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The biography of Althea Gibson was in 23 of the total 31 items evaluated. The biography is complete only if it mentions her professional golf career. Breaking the color barrier on the LPGA Tour was no cakewalk. Gibson suffered financially and was exposed to flagrant racism on a daily basis. She was not allowed into some clubhouses and had to change, eat, and sleep in parking lots. Her struggles were perhaps even more debilitating because she was alone. The male caddies had companionship to help them through the crisis. Yet no source mentions the number of USGA tournaments she entered.

Althea Gibson was not only the first but the only woman in 1963 who had the courage to take her game to the next level—the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour. She was not accepted with open arms, as Babe Zaharias, the Olympian Champion, was. There were no equipment contracts, no financial sponsor support, no integrated housing accommodations, and—especially—no other African American women on the Tour to share her experiences.

She did not want to have a duplication of the negative experiences of her tennis debut with the Press or the LPGA Tour. She had to wonder if the Press was still amazed that she took a bath every afternoon—or if the Tour would require that she be tested for an extra chromosome.¹

The African American women did not have a Tour, but the same group was able to travel from coast to coast to compete in the various local, regional, and national tournaments. A collective image of the women began to take shape when the Black newspapers threw in their support.
The newspapers contained the most comprehensive information about the woman golfer. Some newspaper reporters used descriptions and terminology that minimized the ability of a woman as a golfer, such as

“She is the house wife of . . .”
“She is the wife of Rev. or pastor . . .”
“She is the pretty little matron of . . .”
“She married a postal clerk . . .”
“She is a clerk typist at . . .”

Marital relationships and employment status had nothing to do with the performance of African American woman golfers. However, newspapers, despite their sexism, have provided the most complete archival accounts of the African American woman in the world of golf. As limited as the information is, and despite gaps in reporting, the information is in hard copy.

The newspapers finally documented the existence and successful achievements of African American woman golfers. The coverage included

- Names of playing fields
- Tournament cities and club affiliations
- Highlights of the top players, especially UGA participants
- Photographs of golfers in action

Newspaper articles tied up many loose ends and provided the documentation required to prove that African American woman golfers did exist and were part of an elaborate playing field.

Newspapers also supported the presence of African American women golfers by supplying multitudes of photographs of the players. Ann Gregory was the most photographed woman golfer. Sometimes, however, a photograph was used to summarize an entire event, and some of the most pertinent information was tucked inside the photograph caption—or not printed at all.

In the future, all of this the information should be made accessible in a database searchable by year, sponsor, tournament, tournament winners, and playing field.

Because history repeats itself, we can learn from it. All the sources conveyed the story of the African American male and his plight throughout golf history. Scanning through material to pull out the achievements of the woman is important, because there is evidence that African American women were excellent golfers. So many women were good athletes that, if the true story could be compiled, the results would be enormous.

Robinson (1997) must have thought about this when he decided to throw in a bit of historical memorabilia to whet the appetite—the African American Golf Halls of Fame:
1. The National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame (est. 1959)
2. The National Black Golf Hall of Fame (est. 1986)
3. Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame (est. 1975)

Each one of the “Hall of Fame” curators was contacted to obtain biographical information on the women selected as inductees. The “No Response Syndrome” was cataclysmic. It is disappointing to discover that the biographies and essential data of these legends are not readily available to scholars.

The National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame was founded in 1959, by Anna Robinson and records the achievements of the Black golfers of the time. Twenty-five years later, Adolph Scott, Jr., proposed housing the Hall of Fame memorabilia at the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio. Unfortunately, because of Mr. Scott’s untimely death in 1987, all negotiations were terminated with the Museum. No further actions have been taken to secure a permanent site for the artifacts.


The National Black Golf Hall of Fame is the brainchild of Harold Dunovant of Winston Salem, North Carolina, who proposed the Hall in 1986 to recognize the contributions of Black golfers. William Chandler, Vice-President of the Mecklenburg Parks & Recreation Department, has initiated a campaign to erect a National Black Golf Hall of Fame Building and Museum at the Revolution Park and Golf Course in Charlotte, North Carolina. The completion of this project has become a major commitment of the Dunovant family since 2002. The ground-breaking ceremony is expected in 2008.


The Western States Golf Association Hall of Fame was established in 1975 by Frederick Horton to honor the contributions members made to the organization. There is no definitive information about the repository of Hall of Fame artifacts. The ten women inductees are Mae Crowder (1978), Mary Woodyard (1978), Lillian Fentress (1983), Diane Marbury (1987), Ella Mae Reason (1987), Mercedes Sanford (1989), Pearl Carey (1991), Alma Jackson (1991), Carol Cook (1996), and Argralia Earles (2002).
Recently, in 2004, Malachi Knowles established a fourth “Hall of Fame” in Florida—The African American Golfers Hall of Fame. The purpose of this Hall of Fame is to “research, organize, preserve, archive and celebrate the history, legacy and involvement of all African Americans in the sport and for the benefit of future generations.” Eight women have been inducted—Althea Gibson (2005), Renée Fluker (2005), Selina “Hollywood” Johnson (2005), Ann Gregory (2006), LaJean Gould (2006), Peggy Rhodes-White (2006), Renee Powell (2007), and Agatha M. Delaney (2007).

Although some of these women are well known to the general public, most of them are known only to the golf community. To date, the “Halls” appear to be in name only, and the induction process consists of a tournament, a social affair or dinner, plaques and prizes, and, perhaps, a souvenir booklet.

In many cases, the biography of the inductee is printed in the souvenir booklet. The destination of the booklet is unpredictable. It may end up stored in a trunk, gathering dust in an attic, or as fodder in a recycle bin. The historical record of the inductee is gone. The biography telling all about her good deeds is not archived for the future generations to view. This is unfortunate, because, although the person has earned respect among her peers, the record of her achievement is not available.

There is no built-in safety net for the documentation of the event, and no housing facility exists as a repository enshrining memorabilia, photographs, or biographies of inductees. This tribute to a group of extraordinary athletes has been remiss only in its failure to capture the moments of significance for future reference.

African American golfers need a facility to enshrine mementos of these magnificent athletes, reminding us of their achievements—a place showing African American youths that the African American golfer was more than just an oddity.

The separate “Halls” can retain their autonomy but merge their resources, business acumen, and agendas to reach this shared goal. The African American community can financially support the funding of a repository permanently housing the history of African American golf accomplishments. Several established institutions have been able to provide a modicum of information related to Black golf and should also be petitioned to provide space:

1. Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.
2. National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, Wilberforce, Ohio
Two of the Halls of Fame have recently inducted Althea Gibson and Ann Gregory. Ann Gregory has been inducted previously into the 1966 National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame. The question is why Althea Gibson was not inducted into the National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame or the National Black Golf Hall of Fame before 2003. Why was Althea Gibson ignored as a golfer for over 40 years?

It is relatively unknown that a newspaper article indicates that Althea Gibson was among the inductees in the second National Black Golf Hall of Fame ceremony, held at the Bell Aire Golf Course in Greensboro, North Carolina. In July 1987, “other inductees include . . . Bill Bishop, . . . Bill Wright, . . . Althea Gibson, the first Black female to play on the LPGA tournament, . . . Jackie Robinson . . . .”2

However, the name of Althea Gibson is not listed as a former inductee in a souvenir booklet. Was she denied entry because she was the lone woman among the men being inducted, or did she refuse the honor? The irony of this is that Althea Gibson is an inductee into the 2007 National Black Golf Hall of Fame.

Althea Gibson is finally recognized as a pioneer. It is uncanny that the woman who risked her life as an athlete in an unfamiliar sport was not acknowledged for breaking the racial barrier of the Ladies Professional Golf Association. She was not recognized as a civil rights pioneer by her own people before 2005. It would have been more impressive if Althea Gibson had received her accolades as a “living legend.”

There are forty women listed as Hall of Fame inductees. Only seventeen have a semblance of a biography in some book or reference tool. This should not be the case for a Hall of Fame inductee. A change has to be made, collecting and archiving data for the African American woman golfers. A current Hall of Fame inductee should be a catalyst for change. Getting into a Hall of Fame does not mean that one forsakes an obligation to the rest of the women who are striving to be candidates—or to the golf community as a whole.

There is a concern about the pioneers who are not in a Hall of Fame. Women like Nettie Speedy, Geneva Wilson, Lucy Williams Mitchum, Nancy Mason, and Marie Thompson are not members, and neither are many of the founders of various women’s clubs and youth-oriented programs. Why are women who have attained LPGA Teaching and Club Professional (T&CP) status, and women who have maintained a FUTURES Tour card, not considered?

This dilemma has also prompted queries as to why the World Golf Hall of Fame has not been petitioned to include African American golfers on special exemptions like the Baseball Hall of Fame did for greats from the now-defunct Negro League. This is an area where all of the Civil Rights groups and the African American golf community can coalesce to generate dialogue.

On November 15, 2004, Charlie Sifford was the first African American golfer to be elected into the World Golf Hall of Fame in St. Augustine, Florida. Sifford has...
earned his place among the greats of the game based on his lifetime achievement, and
the beauty of his induction is that it was televised for all of the world to witness.

Not many golfers know that Charlie Sifford was inducted into the 1959 UGA National Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame along with the founder of the UGA, Robert H. Hawkins. Charlie Sifford was also inducted into the 1986 National Black Golf Hall of Fame with James Black, Jim Brown, Pete Brown, Lee Elder, Joe Louis, Calvin Peete, Ted Rhodes, John Shippen, Thomas Smith, Bill Spiller, Moses Steven, Chuck Thorpe, Howard Wheeler, and Arnold Palmer.

The ninth exhibit at the World Golf Hall of Fame is entitled “Leveling the Playing Field.” The first exhibit had a collage of photographs of the best Black caddies and players, and the new exhibit has even more of a minority-based diversity theme. The photos include Tiger Woods, Nancy Lopez, Lee Elder, Lee Trevino, Chi Chi Rodriguez, Charlie Sifford, Althea Gibson, Bill Wright, Ann Gregory, Babe Zaharias, Patty Berg, Joe Louis, and John Shippen.

The plaque for Ann Gregory reads

ANN GREGORY.
In 1956, Ann Gregory became the first African American woman to play in a USGA national championship. Gregory, who lived in Gary, Indiana, was barred from the city's public course until the early 1960s, when she insisted on being allowed to play. “My tax dollars are taking care of the big course,” she said, “and there's no way you can bar me from it.” She teed off and played without interference.

This information does not even begin to tell of the historical feats that Mrs. Gregory accomplished in competitive golf within the United Golfers Association arena; nor does it indicate that Ann Gregory devoted the rest of her life to playing in United States Golf Association events.

The photograph, courtesy of Rhonda Glenn, is not complimentary to the usual beautiful image of Ann Gregory and her famous “I just won another one” smile.

The plaque for Althea Gibson reads

ALTHEA GIBSON
In 1950, the great tennis champion Althea Gibson became the first African American to play—and win—the U. S. Open in tennis.

In 1957 and 1958, she won both Wimbledon and the U.S. Open. At the age of thirty-two, Gibson took up golf, and, in 1963, she became the first African American to join the LPGA Tour, which she played until 1977. She is one of only three African Americans to compete on the women's circuit. The others are Renee Powell (1967 to 1977) and LaRee Pearl Sugg. (World Golf Hall of Fame plaques)

Again, the photograph, courtesy of UPI/Corbis-Bettman, is not flattering to Ms. Gibson.
The World Golf Hall of Fame has enough space to dedicate an entire wing—or at least a room—to the achievements of African Americans in golf. Ann Gregory and Althea Gibson should be inducted for breaking the barriers of segregation in two different eras and in two different playing fields: the United States Golf Association Amateur Tour and the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour.

The roles of the women associated with the game can be categorized as

1. Administrator
2. Activist
3. Club official
4. Club organizer
5. Sports manager
6. Curator
7. Instructor
8. Junior program developer
9. Player—amateur or professional
10. Coach
11. Tournament director

The roles span the seven decades from 1930 to 2007. Because some of the names of the women were only mentioned in a sentence or two, the group was limited to women deemed historical legends of the game. The biographies of some women were selected as of those who particularly affected the game. The women represent the past, present, and future of African American women in the history of golf. These revelations caused concern as to the new direction of the history of African American women in golf. The question is, When will the next tidal wave of golfers appear?

Only four women are usually identified as golfers of any merit: Ann Gregory and the “Big Three.” Ann Gregory is hailed as the most prodigious winner of amateur golf tournaments in African American history. The “Big Three” consists of Althea Gibson, Renee Powell, and LaRee Pearl Sugg, the only women to have earned the credentials to play on the LPGA Tour.

The probability is that these four women broke out of the Negro blockade and approached the world as colored players with some talent. Ann Gregory took the long road through the African American UGA proving grounds and followed the United States Golf Association Women's Amateur route to success and recognition. Althea Gibson fell back on golf as a means to remain in the sports arena. She made her mark and became the first African American to earn her way onto the LPGA Tour. Renee Powell was trained to be the top African American on any tour. Her voyage began as a junior in the UGA, then she became the captain of a college team, she traveled the diplomatic circuit for the United States government, and finally made it to the LPGA Tour. LaRee Sugg adventured through the Asian Tour, the European Tour, and the FUTURES Tour before finding her way to the LPGA Tour.

Today, the African American woman golfer is a highly visible person who plays at various golf courses the world over. She can be seen in Barbados,
Mexico, Brazil, China, Ireland, Japan, and many countries on the continent of Africa.

However, the African American Woman is nowhere to be seen in the competitive arena—as an amateur or professional golfer. Over seventy-five years have passed since Marie Thompson won the first United Golfers Association (UGA) National Women’s Championship in 1930.

The African American woman is not even mentioned as a competitor on the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour or FUTURES Tour—or as a participant in the annual United States Golf Association events. If an African American is fortunate to be entered in any of the Tour or USGA tournaments, she is neither seen nor mentioned in the media.

Many African American women are highly qualified to play as competitors on the national stages, but they have opted to become gainfully employed as high-profile administrators in golf-related careers. Many are graduates with degrees in law, business, journalism, chemistry, education, or architecture. The saving grace is that they are at least guaranteed hefty annual paychecks, with perks, when employed in these capacities.

In 2005, two African American women appeared in golf situations on national television for the entire world to see—Felicia Brown and Brandi Seymour.

Felicia Brown appeared as a contestant in the Big Break III Competition televised on the Golf Channel. Ms. Brown had earned a golf scholarship to Alabama State University, where she was voted a Most Valuable Player three times.

Brandi Seymour appears as a Nationwide Tour golf interviewer for the Golf Channel. Ms. Seymour, an Oregon State University graduate, was an outstanding junior golfer in the Maggie Hathaway Golf Program.

In April 2006, Andia Winslow also appeared on the Golf Channel. She had received a sponsor’s exemption to play in an LPGA tournament. Ms. Winslow is a Yale graduate and has applied for the LPGA Qualifying school.

Kudos should be given to the Golf Channel for trying to insert some women of African American heritage into the national media coverage of the game. This noble attempt raises questions such as

- Will golf remain a racially segregated professional sport open only to white and foreign players?
- Are there no more feisty women like Althea Gibson or Ann Gregory?
- Where are the African American women who want to tear down the barriers of segregation and attempt to racially integrate the tours?
- Where are the African American women who want to bear the burden of golf stardom?
These are the same questions asked of Negro/Black/African American women golfers seven decades ago. The more things change, the more they appear to remain the same!

There are no definitive answers to this dilemma in which the only positive factor is the great amount of talent available. As the rapper and movie director Ice Cube said, “It is all about the Benjamins”—the money.

The burden of the sport is to get enough sponsors to meet a golfer’s daily cash flow problems. Once this task is accomplished, golfers can concentrate on the competition within the sport. Competing successfully in the game requires mental focus. If the financial burden of living from day to day encroaches upon the ability to compete, a golfer can flounder for years trying to salvage a career as a professional. It is not simply about having a game, but also about supporting the costs of the game.

That is why an ‘Incubation System’ should be put in place to help African American women compete on national and professional levels. This appears to be the destiny of a minority golfer, male or female, in the world of golf today. There is no fair way for them to succeed in the competitive golf forum merely on their game prowess.

A safeguard has to be set in place to help minority golfers to succeed on the tours. So often their talent is overwhelmed with such tremendous financial obligations at the start that they have to obtain real jobs to attempt to make ends meet. Both time and effort otherwise available for practice are lost. Eventually, the golfer gives up on trying to make it on the tour.

Financially secure persons and golf manufacturers can come together to form consortiums. Will Smith, the actor, is an excellent example of a financially secure person providing funding to aspiring golfers. He has assisted several aspiring male and female golfers in their professional careers.

Incubating is done all the time in the business world. An incubator consists of financial partners who can provide the funds, training, space, legal systems, staff, and works necessary to get small businesses or creative ideas off to good, uninterrupted starts. Investors support the project until it makes money—and often far beyond. All the encumbrances are taken care of by the incubator. When the project is mature enough to survive, it is spun off as a “stand-alone” or a subsidiary of the parent company. But the support system is still there, ready to assist the fledgling company. Aspiring golf professionals can fill the role of the “infant company.”

The incubation system could begin at the high school and college levels. It should be patterned after basketball, football, and baseball as a franchise-based development system. Aspiring golfers should be groomed to become professionals with the knowledge incubator systems will become operational as support.
The incubator could inform talent scouts about the golfer’s progress and instruct golfers in the potential talent requirements needed to obtain full-tuition scholarships to college programs, or to go directly to a tour. Golfers could then concentrate on honing their golf skills, obtaining degrees, or attempting to become professional players.

The incubator could have in place a team of experts available for consultation to college-bound or tour-bound high school graduates, golfers already in college, and declared golfers floundering on mini-tours in need of guidance. The team could consist of a financial advisor, legal representation, a life skills manager, a transportation and booking agent, a sports talent scout, a sports trainer, a sports psychologist, a sports physician, a tour liaison, and a tutor. The life skills manager is particularly important, because some youth and young adults have not learned how to adjust to the requirements of living on their own. All of these services are provided on a pro bono basis so not to interfere with golfers’ amateur status.

If this type of incubation system could be put into place for minority golfers, it would provide a safety net for willing and talented players considering golf as a career. Perhaps this is another area where the “Halls of Fame” can be of benefit by merging their resources to relay to the African American community, the entrenched golf organizations, golf equipment manufacturers, and media sponsors the need to support a fully funded “incubation system” for aspiring golf professionals.

The African American Golf Halls of Fame sponsors can join together to create an incubator initiative for aspiring golf professionals. The active Hall of Fame networks already have these types of professional men and women within their organizations, as members. They need to begin the process of establishing communication between the African American communities, corporate America (the source of financial resources), and the Tours (which can provide professional assistance).

When the incubator is activated, golfers must be willing to contribute to their choice of golf as a career. Aspiring golf professionals must be committed to the program because of the overall investments. The only responsibility of aspiring golf professionals is to make an effort to succeed.

However, if the infant company (the aspiring golf professional) cannot become operational after a designated period of time, it is ‘spun off’ as a stand-alone investment. All debt is absorbed by the incubator.

This concept is analogous to Althea Gibson’s dream of establishing an academy to train and encourage talented youth regardless of their ability to pay. It is speculated that the Althea Gibson Foundation will be able to crystallize her dream. But incubation systems cannot become operational without aspiring golfers. Where are the aspiring African American golf professionals?
African American aspiring golf professionals can be found in the junior golf systems and the Historic Black Colleges and Universities’ (HBCUs’) collegiate golf programs.

Practically every African American golf club had an established junior program from the fifties to the seventies. The Bob-O-Links, the junior division of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club, is one of the programs surviving to this day. It was established in 1954 by Agnes Williams.

The United Golfers Association (UGA) supported the junior golf programs. The participants from the six districts around the country competed at the annual National Open Championships. Some of the outstanding junior girl golfers of that period in time were Yvonne Amber, Jennifer Armstrong, Juanita Arvin, Donna Brown, Melvon Camp, Doris Evans, Carolyn Frazier, Rita Hart, Idaree Jackson, Tonya Jackson, Rofina Langford, Mildred Montgomery, Ernestine Philpott, Renee Powell, Deborah Rhodes, Jean Robertson, Viola Sams, Emma Savage, Diane Thomas, Madeline Turner, Shirley Turner, Jeannette Williams, and Stephanie Wilson.

Renee Powell is the only National Open Junior Girls Champion to have become a Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour professional.

In 1967, Lonnie Jones, was the director of the United Golfers Association Junior divisions. The divisions consisted of over 300 junior golfers between the ages of 7 to 11 and 12 to 17. These juniors came from competitions within the districts and national playoffs. Jones states that the junior golf tournaments are completely integrated, having a 75 percent Caucasian membership.4

Was this announcement supposed to be a policy of reversed discrimination by a Black organization? It is a dilemma as to why this national group would boast about having only 25 percent participation by the Black youth. Why did the United Golfers Association not make a concerted effort to encourage more African American junior golfers to participate in the annual United Golfers Association National Open Junior Championship tournaments? Is this the reason why there is only one Tiger Woods on the Professional Golf Association (PGA) Tour and no one on the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour?

Many established African American junior golf academies and various junior programs are still active throughout the country. The programs are very successful at getting children involved in the game of golf. However, the production rate of graduating career oriented candidates should have increased with the number of programs available.

Although golf is a social sport to the majority, it is also a career to a few. Talent must be exposed to the game and then nurtured to maturity. The African American sports community has seen this concept bear fruit in the classic examples of Bill and
Renee Powell, Earl and Tiger Woods, Richard, Venus, and Serena Williams, and the Wilmington physician’s consortium and Althea Gibson.

There are twenty-one historic black colleges and universities (HBCUs) that provide golf scholarships:

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<td>Tennessee State</td>
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It was expected that these institutions would be perfect places to locate and identify many aspiring golf professionals for incubation system trials. This is not entirely the case. The recruitment policies at some of the HBCUs recruit candidates from other races and ethnic groups from European and Asian countries. This recruitment concept echoes the sentiment announced by Lonnie Jones in 1967 in the Black United Golfers Association’s statement that “. . . tournaments are completely integrated with a 75% Caucasian membership.” The sorrow of it all is that these recruited ‘others’ are able to obtain full academic scholarships, while the African American may be considered for a partial scholarship, if any.

It is strange that both men and women’s teams at the annual Intercollegiate Minority Golf Championships are composed of the other groups of nationalities and races, because the Intercollegiate Minority Golf Championships are basically comprised of the Historic Black Colleges and Universities.

This is why the incubation system is sorely needed to target and nurture aspiring African American golf professionals for the tours. Many African Americans are in golf-related positions on the Tours. They are behind the scenes as club pros and other association front-end positions; but they are not in the lineup of professional tour players.

The establishment of the professional incubation system has been discussed. Locating potential African American professional golfers has been explored as necessary for the success of this proposition. The next parts of the equation are the production, and survival, of the African American woman professional golfer. She must be able to enter the Ladies Professional Golf Association players’ structure.

Two acts of legislation made a significant impact on Afro-American female athletes’ attempts to participate in the world of sports.

In 1964, Title Six, or the Civil Rights Act, was passed to ensure that all Americans would enjoy equal opportunity in federally funded programs.
In 1972, Title Nine, The Education Act, was enacted to ensure all students equal access to any educational institution receiving federal funds, as well as to those institutions’ sports programs.

In 1997, The World Golf Foundation announced the “First Tee” Initiative, a program developed to provide youth of all ethnic groups the opportunity to reach their full potential through exposure to the game of golf.

Title Nine has been informally known as the “women’s sports act” because so many girls became actively involved in sports previously off-limits to both girls and women. Team sports in particular received female candidates, because team sports allow errors to be compensated for by the team. In individual sports, individuals are solely responsible for wins and losses. Most people find it easier to fit into a team than to accept the burden of individual fame or shame.

After 1972, many African American women became stars in various sports, but no African American was able to survive the ordeals of the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour. By this time Renee Powell was in her fifth year as an LPGA member, and Althea Gibson had given up as the “Civil Rights Maven of Golf.”

It takes a truly brave and competitive spirit to go out on a limb and call attention to oneself, saying, “here I am—I have come to play and to be the champion” with the positive mental attitude that makes a winner. But this is also the kind of attitude that will make African Americans unaccepted. Society deems this type of attitude as brash and will withdraw any support previously allocated. Althea Gibson tested this in 1960 during her tennis tour and, in 1963, in golf.

It seems as if the Ladies Professional Golf Association would have actively sought and groomed Negro, Black, and African American women golfers to play and survive on the tour, assuring adequate housing and travel as well as practice facilities and club house privileges entirely without prejudice. The Ladies Professional Golf Association opted to blame private clubs for any embarrassing moments.

Although the LPGA claims it did not have a “White Only” clause, it did not welcome Althea Gibson with open arms. In her book, So Much to Live For, she acknowledges several women of the LPGA for their support. If the LPGA had seized the moment, Althea Gibson could have been their claim to corporate financial gain.

It has been over forty years since Althea Gibson tried.

Three precedents have been put forward to assist the African American woman in the leap to the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour:

1. 1964, the Civil Rights Act
2. 1972, the Education Act
3. 1997, the First Tee Initiative
After Title VI and Title IX and the First Tee Initiative placed public emphasis on equality, at least 25 to 50 African American women might be expected as active professional members on the tours. Rhoden (2006) indicates that “African American male athletes benefited from the Civil Rights movement in sport . . . . Black women have largely had to go it alone . . . . African American women have not had an extended moment in the sun; the women’s movement in sports has suffered as a result.”

Let us imagine a Ms. Daydreamer, who has dared to be different. Ms. Daydreamer played at golf at the age of seven. Her family visited relatives every summer, and, while at the family compound, the children played miniature golf. Ms. Daydreamer finally graduated to a par three course where she developed her skills with the three-wood, seven-iron, pitching wedge, and putter.

Ms. Daydreamer developed an affinity for golf by being involved in a monthly game with her father and his buddies. The real fun came in the summer when everybody—uncles, aunts, and cousins—had an annual golf tournament at the family reunion. Ms. Daydreamer always won a little trophy for the girls and usually beat some of the adult women.

Now it is time to select a college not too far away from home. Her choice is one of the small Historic Black Colleges and Universities, one of the best decisions she will ever make. Ms. Daydreamer changes her major two or three times during the course of her four years, and other interests also intervene, including golf, interpretive dancing, acting, and romance.

During the graduation ceremony, the commencement speaker says to “aim high and be committed to the future.” Ms. Daydreamer soon finds herself in the pursuit of professional employment, reviewing grant applications and playing golf as a recreational outlet. By this time she is almost a scratch golfer and has a USGA handicap of six.

She begins to wonder why no African American golfer has made an attempt to become the fourth on the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour.

Ms. Daydreamer has a choice to make—whether to obtain the ultimate academic degree and put a professional career on hold or to take a chance to carry on the legacy of Althea Gibson as an LPGA Tour member. To the dismay of her family, colleagues, friends, and significant other, she chooses to try to make the Tour. The family circle regroups to offer some assistance in her quest for the Grail.

No one said life would be easy. Ms. Daydreamer works at odd jobs for six months and tries to Monday qualify on the Duramed FUTURES Tour and the LPGA Tour. It has been a year, now, and she is beginning to wonder if her choice was wise. She has given herself five years. If she cannot reach her goal, she will at least know she gave it her best shot.
Ms. Daydreamer is a good candidate for an incubation system, but how will she get in touch with a company willing to invest in a neophyte? She needs a good coach and a sports agent, as well as an intermediary who will tout her skills and find financial support. This is where the African American sports community and LPGA can join forces to prepare a list of companies and agencies willing to become incubators. Nike seems the best example of an incubator in today's world of sports.

Now that the Commissioner of the LPGA Tour is a female, she may be more sympathetic to the plight of African American women golfers. All other commissioners have been white males who probably had no clue that there were any African American women who knew how to play golf. It is up to the Ladies Professional Golf Association to set a precedent and devise a special exemption for the African American woman golfer to test her skills. The special exemption is not like a sponsor exemption but is an incubation system exemption, by means of which the LPGA would be a player's incubator for a year.

Although these thoughts may be perceived as negative, they are not. They are meant to provoke thought about the plight of the African American woman in American golf.

Identifying the current women stars who are reminiscent of the champions of yesteryear is still a dilemma. They are out there somewhere, but they are in need of inspiration, guidance, and finances. Perhaps the profiles in this endeavor will encourage someone to pursue golf as a career. It is unlikely that all the aspirants will come from ‘First Tee’ programs or the inner city. It is to be hoped that they will come from a cross-section of African American life. Whoever they are, they must have the courage of their convictions to survive, and they must receive substantial support to overcome some of the obstacles they will face over such an extended period of time. It behooves all minority golfers to become involved in an “Incubation System Initiative” to perpetuate the success of the new professional golfers on the block.

The African American community has seen the first, second, and third women's attempts to make it to the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour. Now is the time to expect the thirtieth or fiftieth professional African American woman on the LPGA Tour. Then, and only then, will the ethnic encyclopedia references and research tools carve out index categories of Golf—Women, Black, and Golf—Women, Afro-American; and Golf—Women, African American and under these categories will be listed the names of many woman golfers.
Each sport has a language of its own that conveys information about scoring and the interpretation of the game’s rules. In the case of golf,

- The playing area consists of 18 holes, divided into “the front nine” and “the back nine.”
- Each hole contains a tee box, fairway, green, and flagstick.
- The tools of the game are a driver, fairway woods, utility clubs, irons, wedges, and a putter.
- The penalty areas are called sand traps (bunkers), water, and out of bounds.
- The strokes consist of the drive, the fairway shot, the pitch, the chip, and the putt.
- The scoring is always in relation to par. Therefore, a good score is par or less.

The game is usually played in a foursome (four people) but is often played as a twosome (pair) or even alone. The object of the game is to get the golf ball in the hole in the least amount of strokes. If a hole is designated as a par 3, it means that players are expected to get the ball in the hole in three strokes (par). Strokes over par are called bogeys (double, triple, and so on). Strokes under par are called ace, birdie, eagle and double eagle.

The jargon in this sport is simplicity itself and can be called “Golf Talk.”

*ace:* A hole in one
*address:* The position taken to play the ball
*albatross:* A score 3 strokes under par for a hole
*back nine:* The second set of 9 holes of the total 18 holes
ball marker: A coin used to mark a ball
birdie: A score 1 stroke under par for a hole
bogey: A score 1 stroke over par for a hole
bunker: A depressed area filled with sand
casual water: Accumulation of water during stance
chip: A low-trajectory shot near the green
course: The complete 9 or 18 holes
divot: A piece of turf dug out by a swung club
dogleg: A bend in the fairway
double bogey: A score of 2 over par for a hole
draw: A controlled “hook” ball flight
drive: To hit the ball from the tee box
duck hook: A severely hooked ball flight
eagle: A score of 2 strokes under par for a hole
fade: A ball flight slightly turning from left to right
fairway: The course from tee box to green
fat shot: A swung club hitting the ground behind the ball
flagstick: A pole in the hole on the green
fore: A term to indicate danger
front nine: The first 9 holes of a total 18 holes
gimme: A short putt that is conceded
green: Putting surface
hazard: A sand bunker/trap or water
hole in one: A hole completed in one stroke
hook: Ball flight that curves left of its target
iron: A club with a metal head
lag: A putt that leaves the ball near to the hole
lie: The position of the ball at rest
LPGA: Ladies Professional Golf Association
markers, tee box: Mark the tee box area
mulligan: Shot without a penalty
out of bounds: Outside the fairway
par: Expected number of strokes needed to complete a hole
penalty stroke: Stroke added for a violation
PGA: Professional Golf Association
pin: Flag stick
pitch: Short and high shot
pro: A player who teaches or plays for a fee
putt: A stroke to move the ball across the green toward the hole
sand trap: A hazard containing sand
scratch: To play at par, or zero handicap
short game: Shots of chipping, pitching, and putting
slice: Ball flight curving to the right of its target
stance: Position of the feet when addressing the ball
stroke: Any forward motion of the club
sweet spot: Center face of the golf club
tee box: Area designated for beginning play
Texas wedge: Shot that uses a putter to advance a ball that is off the green
turn: Going to the second 9 holes
unplayable lie: Position of the ball where it cannot be played, as in rocks
waggle: Preliminary motions of a club before hitting the ball
wedge: Club with a heavy sole (for gap, lob, pitching, sand).
Appendix A
Photographic Gallery

It was not feasible to reproduce all of the photograph images as they appeared in the various newspapers. This section is for the sports fan or historian interested in delving further into the African American woman’s place in history. It will allow sports fans and historians an entry pointing to where even more photographs can be viewed. History is best understood when there is a face to which one can relate to as an event is being described. The following citations refer to where so many of the selected golf photographs can be located.

Afro-American Newspaper
Harris, Helen “Hail the Champ.” *Afro-American*, September 26, 1959, 13.
Hazzard, Alvira. “She’ll Be Ready.” *Afro-American*, August 16, 1941, 23.

**Chicago Defender Newspaper**


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Campbell, Mary. “Job Well Done.” Chicago Defender, August 22, 1953, 22.


Pitts, Vivian. “Eyes Local Tournaments.” Chicago Defender, June 1, 1940, 24.
Robinson, Anna M. “Beaming Over . . .” Chicago Defender, August 5–11, 1961, NP.
Sanford, Naomi. “Job Well Done.” Chicago Defender, August 22, 1953, 22.
Siler, Jula. “Golf’s King and Queen,” Chicago Defender. September 9, 1933, 8.
Siler, Julia. “St. Louis Golf Champions.” Chicago Defender, August 20, 1938, 8.
Sixth City Golf Club. “UGA Purses Top $3,500.” Chicago Defender, August 18, 1951, 17.
Stewart, Alice. “Alice Stewart Wins Title In Louis Tourney.” Chicago Defender, August 26, 1950, 18.
Stewart, Alice. “Champions.” Chicago Defender, September 6, 1952, 16.
Thompson, Marie. “Wins Again.” Chicago Defender, September 12, 1931, 8.
Truitt, Mary. “Highlights of UGA’s 46th Meet.” Chicago Defender, September 2–8, 1972, 28.
Williams, Lucy. “Runner-Up For Golf Title.” Chicago Defender, September 7, 1940, 20.
Some of the junior girl golfers of the fifties through the seventies who competed and won a United Golfers Association Championship are listed below.

Yvonne Amber  Jennifer Armstrong  Juanita Arvin
Donna Brown  Melvon Camp  Doris Evans
Carolyn Frazier  Rita Hart  Idaree Jackson
Tonya Jackson  Rofina Langford  Mildred Montgomery
Ernestine Philpott  Renee Powell  Deborah Rhodes
Jean Robertson  Viola Sams  Emma Savage
Diane Thomas  Madeline Turner  Shirley Turner
Jeannette Williams  Stephanie Wilson

Renee Powell is the only junior girl of this group who became an active professional on the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour.

Often the names of the girls who competed in the United Golfers Association National Open Championships’ Junior Girls divisions were buried at the end of an article. A summary of the newspaper accounts highlight some of their accomplishments.

1952—Rofina Langford, Cleveland, OH
Rofina Langford won the Fairway Golf Club Tournament Girls Junior Championship in Dayton.


1952—Melvon Camp, Chicago, IL
Melvon Camp finished second to Rofina Langford.

1957—Jean Robertson, Chicago, IL
Jean Robertson was the winner of the United Golfers Association Midwestern District Junior Girls tournament held in Gary, IN.

1958—Jean Robertson
Jean Robertson, 16-year-old Bob-O-Link member and United Golfers Association Jr. Girls champion enters the 20th Midwestern Tournament to compete against a field that includes Ann Gregory.

1958—Shirley Turner, Detroit MI
Seventeen-year-old Shirley Turner won the United Golfers Association National Open Junior Girls Championship held in Pittsburgh, PA.

1958—Renee Powell, East Canton OH
Twelve-year-old Renee Powell finished in second place at the United Golfers Association National Open Junior Girls Championship tournament.

1958—Juanita Arvin, Baltimore MD

1959—Renee Powell
Renee Powell was the victor in the United Golfers Association National Open Upper Junior Girls Championship, held in Washington, DC.

1959—Madeline Turner, Ocean Township, NJ

1959—Diane Thomas, Rockville, MD

1959—Idaree Jackson, Chicago, IL
Idaree Jackson is expected to be in competition with former United Golfers Association National Open Junior Girls Champion Jean Robertson at the Chicago Women’s Golf Club Annual Walter Speedy Memorial.

1960—Renee Powell
Renee Powell defends the 1959 United Golfers Association National Open Upper Junior Girls Championship title in Chicago, IL.

1960—Madeline Turner
Madeline Turner won her second United Golfers Association National Open Junior Girls Championship in the under-14 division.

1960—Deborah Rhodes, St. Louis, MO
Deborah Rhodes, daughter of the legendary Ted Rhodes, finished in second place in the United Golfers Association National Open Junior Girls Championship in the under-14 division.

1961–1963—No report of winners

1964—Renee Powell
Seventeen-year-old Renee Powell wins the Sixth City Golf Championship for the third time in a row.

1964—Renee Powell
Renee Powell wins the 1964 United Golfers Association National Open Women's Championship.

1964—Mildred Montgomery, Chicago, IL
Mildred Montgomery, a Bob-O-Link product, finished in fourth place in the third flight of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club Annual Invitational and Walter Speedy Memorial Tournament.

1975—Viola Sams, Columbus OH
Fourteen-year-old Viola Sams, an entrant in the United Golfer Association National Open Junior Girls Championship bracket is visualized as the next Renee Powell.
Source: “At last, young golfers are national.” Afro-American, August 30, 1975, 9.
Winning the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship was equivalent to winning the United States Golf Association Women’s Open Championship. A golfer is only supposed to win one major national tournament in a lifetime. It was the “Major Championship” title and trophy.

To win the title once was a feat in itself. It was almost impossible to win the UGA National Open Women’s Championship more than once—especially since each championship was played on a different golf course located in a different city in a different state. Twenty-nine women have been the National Open Women’s Champion at least once in a span of fifty-four years. Ten women have won the Championship twice in their golf career. Five women have been awarded the Women’s Championship crown from three to seven times during the course of their careers. The names listed below indicate how deep the talent ran in the playing field for the championship round (this list does not even include the players in the other flights).

**One National Championship Title**

Ella Able, Alma Arvin, Cleo Ball, Debra Bennett, Mary Brown, Thelma Cowans, Ethel Funches, Vera Gillespie, Doretha Green, Ann Gregory, Carrie Jones, Clara Kellnudi, Joy Little, Melnee Moye, Exie O’Chier, Renee Powell, Julia Siler, Alice Stewart, Ernestine Stewart, Laurie Stokien, Wilhelmenia Stringer, Marie Thompson, Eoline Thornton, Mary Truitt, Vernice Turner, Lucy Williams, Geneva Wilson

**Two National Championship Titles**

Ella Able, Thelma Cowans, Ethel Funches, Ann Gregory, Naomi Jenkins, Exie O’Chier, Marie Thompson, Vernice Turner, Lucy Williams, Geneva Wilson
Three National Championship Titles
Thelma Cowans, Ethel Funches, Ann Gregory, Lucy Williams

Four National Championship Titles
Thelma Cowans, Ethel Funches, Ann Gregory, Lucy Williams

Five National Championship Titles
Thelma Cowans, Ethel Funches, Ann Gregory

Six National Championship Titles
Ethel Funches, Ann Gregory

Seven National Championship Titles

Consecutive Championship Titles
Marie Thompson won championships in 1930 and 1931.
Ella Able captured her two titles in 1934 and 1935.
Lucy William was the winner in 1936 and 1937.
Geneva Wilson was victorious in 1939 and 1940.
Thelma Cowans was the victor in 1954 and 1955.
Ethel Funches won her two championships in 1959 and 1960.
Ann Gregory joined the club with wins in 1965 and 1966.
Ethel Funches won three consecutive titles from 1967 through 1969.
Exie O’Chier repeated her wins in 1970 and 1971.
Naomi Jenkins won her two Championships in 1982 and 1983.

It is obvious from the data that three women dominated the United Golfers Association National Women's Championship division—Ann Gregory, Ethel Funches, and Thelma Cowans. Ann Gregory played out of the Chicago Women’s Golf Club, Ethel Funches played out of Wake Robin Golf Club, and Thelma Cowans started her wins while playing in the Detroit Golf Club before moving to Los Angeles and playing out of the Vernondale Golf Club. Thus there was representation from the East Coast, the Midwest, and the West Coast women’s golf clubs.
Ann Gregory was given the title “Queen of Negro Golf” by the press because of her dominance of the women’s playing fields. The Chicago Women’s Golf Club had a very positive relationship with the Chicago Defender, making Ann Gregory the focus of much of its news. Ann Gregory was especially the Queen of the United Golfers Association Midwestern District, winning the championship title in practically every tournament she entered. She was the brightest star in any field of competitors.

Ethel Funches never got as much media coverage as Ann Gregory—probably because of the laxity of her public relations representative. If Ann Gregory was the Queen of Negro Golf, then Ethel Funches has to be royally dubbed as “Her Excellency of Negro Golf” or the “Royal Highness of Negro Golf.” Ethel Funches won nearly every local and regional tournament she entered. In addition, she won the Rheingold Tournament of Champions several times—and it should not be forgotten that Ethel Funches won the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championship seven times within a ten-year span. Ethel Funches elected to remain with the United Golfers Association tournament venues, but Ann Gregory chose to move on to challenge her talents elsewhere.

Thelma Cowans can be described as the “Princess of Negro Golf.” She was small in stature and had the golf game of a warrior. She played to win—with no holds barred. She was competitive and usually won any tournament she entered. The success of the United Golfers Association National Open Women’s Championships revolved around these three women, each of whom was elected to the United Golfers Association National Black Afro-American Golfers Hall of Fame.

### The UGA National Open Women’s Champions (1930–84)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>2nd Place</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Marie Thompson</td>
<td>Casa Loma, WI</td>
<td>Lucy Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Marie Thompson</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>Lucy Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Lucy Williams</td>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>Marie Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Julia Siler</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>Lucy Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Ella Able</td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
<td>Lucy Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Ella Able</td>
<td>Yorktown Heights, NY</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Lucy Williams</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>Laura Thoroughgood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Lucy Williams</td>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>Aline Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Melnee Moya</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>Cleo Ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Geneva Wilson</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Aline Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Geneva Wilson</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>Lucy W. Mitchum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Cleo Ball</td>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>Vivian Pitts</td>
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No competitions were held during the war years (1942–1945)

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Lucy W. Mitchum</td>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>Hazel Foreman</td>
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<td>1947</td>
<td>Thelma Cowans</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>Lorraine Sawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>2nd Place</td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Mary Brown</td>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>Hazel Foreman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Thelma Cowans</td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
<td>Mary Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Ann Gregory</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>Eoline Thornton</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Eoline Thornton</td>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>Myrtice McIver</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Alice Stewart</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA</td>
<td>Ann Gregory</td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Ann Gregory</td>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
<td>Theresa Howell</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Thelma Cowans</td>
<td>Dallas, TX</td>
<td>Eoline Thornton</td>
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<td>1955</td>
<td>Thelma Cowans</td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>[Thelma Cowans].</td>
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<td>Alma Arvin</td>
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Alma Arvin Philadelphia, PA Effie Brent

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<th>City</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Ann Gregory</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>Ethel Funches</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Vernice Turner</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA</td>
<td>Myrtle Patterson</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Ethel Funches</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>Elizabeth McNeal</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Ethel Funches</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>Nellie Randall</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Vernice Turner</td>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>Myrtice McIver</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Carrie Jones</td>
<td>Memphis, TN</td>
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<td>1963</td>
<td>Ethel Funches</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>Frances Mays</td>
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<td>1964</td>
<td>Renee Powell</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Ann Gregory</td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Ann Gregory</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Ethel Funches</td>
<td>Miami, FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Ethel Funches</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Ethel Funches</td>
<td>Turnersville, NJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Exie O’Chier</td>
<td>New Haven, CT</td>
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<td>1971</td>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>Mary Truitt</td>
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<td>1973</td>
<td>Ethel Funches</td>
<td>Turnersville, NJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Clara Kellnudi</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>Laurie Stokien</td>
<td>Towson, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Debra Bennett</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>Joy Little</td>
<td>New Haven, CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Ernestine Stewart</td>
<td>Nassau, Bahamas</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Vera Gillespie</td>
<td>San Juan, PR</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>Innisbrook, FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Wilhelmenia Stringer</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Naomi Jenkins</td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Naomi Jenkins</td>
<td>Rehobeth, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Doretha, Green</td>
<td>Dayton, OH</td>
<td>No Information</td>
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</table>
Chapter One: Tee Time

1. “Open, Amateur and Women’s Amateur Play—Former Champions in 1940 UGA.” Chicago Defender, August 10, 1940, 23. The Chicago Women’s Golf Club is the host. “. . . Mrs. Geneva Wilson, Chicago, is defending champion; Miss Mel Moye, Atlanta, 1938 champion; Mrs. Siler, St. Louis, 1932 champion; Mrs. Alleen Davis, Detroit, runner-up in Los Angeles, 1936, runner-up in Cleveland, 1938; Mrs. Lucy Williams, Indianapolis, winner in 1932, 1936, 1937, runner-up in 1930, 1931, 1933 and 1934; Marie Thompson formerly of Chicago, but now lives in Detroit, winner in 1931 and 1932.”


3. “Crack Field For Fifth Vernondale Golf Tourney.” Chicago Defender, August 9, 1952, 8. Photograph of founder Mae Crowder and members.

Chapter Two: Where Are You? Ethnic References

The two references that do attempt to include a comprehensive history of women in golf are

1. Black Women in America. The reference sources tend to concentrate on the popular team sports like tennis and track-and-field. There are volumes of information on women in these sports. Although Althea Gibson was a “legend” in tennis, she was not given the acclaim due her golf career—probably because she was not able to penetrate the inner circle of the sport as many sport fans had envisioned; and she did not have the support structure to which she had been accustomed to and was prevalent during her tennis career.
2. *Hard Road to Glory, Since 1946*. Historians have focused on Ann Gregory and Renee Powell as the predominate women in the golf world. Ashe went a step further to highlight the women Amateur Champions within the United Golfers Association from 1926 to 1948 in one comprehensive format. Now that records are available and history developed, there is a good probability that the reference sources will make a concentrated effort to update their material on the history and names of the African American women in the sport of golf.

Chapter Three: The Clubhouse: Ethnic Golf Books

All of the authors of the five books paid homage to the African American woman golfer and should be on a “must read” list. However, two of the authors revealed hidden information about the achievements of the woman golfer.


2. Marvin Dawkins and Graham Kinloch, *African American Golfers during the Jim Crow Era* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000). Documentation of this sort should be archived in a research facility. The data consists of the name of the woman amateur, male amateur, and male professional.

Chapter Four: The Sign-in Sheet: Newspapers

1. “Golf For Women; Mrs. Jerenia Reid.” *Afro-American*, June 12, 1937, 17. “She is a member of a newly organized golf club in Washington, D C.” Photograph of Jerenia Reid.

2. “Chicago Defender Trophy.” *Chicago Defender*, August 17, 1940, 22. The photograph caption states that “Miss Lillian Russell, Chicago, holds the Chicago Defender trophy for the national amateur golf championship of the United Golfers Association. This trophy was placed in competition in 1938 . . . Any golfer winning it three times becomes permanent possessor of the trophy.”

3. “Champion Seeks To Repeat.” *Chicago Defender*, August 17, 1940, 22. “The most unusual part of this national open, national men’s amateur and national women’s golf tournament is that it is the first time that any woman’s golf club has been host to the national championship play in the history of the United Golfers Association.”


5. Carrie Jones, 1962 United Golfers Association Champion. An acknowledgement of her historic achievement is buried in the article titled “DC site of UGA national tourney.”
Afro-American, August 17, 1963, 16. The article lists the names of some of the women expected to participate in the upcoming UGA event, including “the defending champion Miss Carrie Jones of Jackson, Mississippi.”

6. Renee Powell, 1964 United Golfers Association Champion. The 1964 media coverage consists of a photograph of Lee Elder holding the Seagram Vanguard Trophy in the Chicago Defender, September 19–26, 1964, 20. There is no mention of Renee Powell. The United Golfers Association revealed the new format to be used in the national tournament matches in 1965. “New Format Announced for Nat’l Golf Tourney.” Afro-American, August 14, 1965, 18. The article indicates that the national championship will be stroke play rather than medal play. The names of the defending champions are listed at the end of the article. “. . . other 1964 winners were Renee Powell, of Canton, Ohio, women’s division.”


8. Ethel Funches, 1967 United Golfers Association Champion. The report on the Miami Springs UGA Champions can be found in “On the Fairways . . .” by Edward Hargrove. Afro-American, September 2, 1967, 16. “Ms. Ethel P. Funches returned from Miami, Fla., as the winner of three trophies. Mrs. Funches was the medalist of the women’s Open Division; winner of the Senior Women’s Division; and winner of the Open Women’s Division.”

Chapter Five: The Golf Cart: Title IX

1. The passage of Title Nine has allowed for the creation, growth, and support of an increase in high school and college female golf teams, and the LPGA Tour and Futures Tour are reaping the benefit.

   However, there should be a concern as to why there has not been an influx of African American young women on these Tours. There seems to be no parity in the relationship of monies invested into the programs and the presence of African American females.

   2. It is difficult to understand why Historically Black Colleges and Universities have all ‘white teams’ or all ‘foreign team’ squad members receiving full athletic golf scholarships with no African Americans in the mix. Does this mean that the African American student is not qualified to obtain a golf scholarship? Does this mean that all of the talk about a First Tee Program for minorities is all hype to obtain grants and monies for whites and foreigners? This shuffle-and-mix analogy also filters down to the El-Hi levels, because there are less African Americans on the teams. Golf scholarships should be allocated on the same financial scale as are football and basketball.


   4. And, probably, we all should step back and read a page from the playbooks of Bill Powell, Earl Woods, and the Wilmington physicians to learn how to raise and nurture a talented child—or, if the child is not born with talent, plant the seed in the fertile and untainted vessel, helping it grow to its full potential as a great athlete.

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This means to make sacrifices and to take the time to practice, using time and funding to their fullest so that, by the time the prodigy is ready to graduate from high school, the scout will have the scholarships and support teams ready to work with the talent that began its training at three years old.

Then after graduation from college, the potential talent can turn professional with the endorsements in hand. One cannot expect to play on any tour with an inadequate financial structure. The incubation system awaits.

Title Nine has presented the opportunity, and the First Tee is making an attempt to provide the tools and the practice facilities. Now, it is our responsibility to put all of these efforts together for potential African American woman golfers.

Chapter Six: The Sky Caddie: Organizations

1. “Wake Robin Golfers in 18-Hole Contest.” Afro-American, July 24, 1937, 18. Team matches were reviewed by Dr. George Adams and Herbert Bethea of the men’s Royal Golf Club. Club emblems were given to Ethel Terrell, Addie Adams, Clara Jones, Paris Brown, Ethel Williams, Mabel Jones, Ida Ferrer, Jerenia Reid, and Sarah Smith.


5. “Crack Field In Fifth Vernondale Golf Tourney.” Chicago Defender, August 8, 1953, 13. Photograph of the membership which includes Thelma Cowans kneeling on the right end, Maggie Hathaway standing on the left end, and founder Mae Crowder standing on the right end.


Chapter Seven: The First Tee: Pioneers

4. “The Top Field Among Women in Golf.” *Chicago Defender*, July 31, 1937, 20. Photograph of Mary Brown, Lucy Williams (Mitchum), and Cleo Ball.
9. “Louisiana Player Upsets Dope”; “Edison Marshall Defeats Robert Ball, the Defending Champion.” *Chicago Defender*, September 6, 1930, 1 & 9. Thompson wins UGA championship over Lucy Williams, Ester B. Smith, Pearl Dorn, Lucille McKee, Thelma Funches, Bell Diggs. Miss Thompson had played with the men using her handicap the day before.

Chapter Eight: The Front Nine: They Dared to Be Different


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Chapter Nine: The Back Nine: The Next Level

2. Ibid.

Chapter Ten: The Honorees

7. “Mrs. Pitts With 8 Strokes As Handicap Nips Cleo Ball.” *Chicago Defender*, October 3, 1936, 14.
8. “Here Are Champion and Two Rivals In the First Golf Meet Here.” *Chicago Defender*, May 29, 1937, 4. Photograph of Vivian Pitts, Anna Black, and Cleo Ball.


18. “Rhodes Wins UGA; Favored In Louis Tournament; Other Titles Go To Mrs. Cowans, Butler Cooper.” Chicago Defender, September 3, 1949, 15. Cowans defeated Mary Brown, the 1948 champion, to gain the crown.


20. “Louis Retains Links Title in Detroit Tourney.” Chicago Defender, August 23, 1952, 17. “Mary Brown was third to the title winner, Eoline Thornton.”


22. “Ted Rhodes, Anne Gregory Win Golf Titles; Tex Guillory Beats Big Field To Amateur Title.” Chicago Defender, September 2, 1950, 17. Eoline Thornton was defeated by Ann Gregory for the 1950 National Open Women's title.


26. “Alice Stewart Wins Title In Louis Tourney.” Chicago Defender, August 26, 1950, 18. Mrs. Stewart defeated Thelma Cowans in the semi-final round and then won the Championship title.


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42. Ibid. Wilhelmenia Stringer is the 1981 United Golfers Association Women’s Champion.

43. Ibid. The 1982 and 1983 United Golfers Association Women’s Champion is Naomi Jenkins.

44. Ibid. Doretha Green won the United Golfers Association Women’s Championship in 1984. No additional information has been located about the winners of any national tournament won by a woman since 1984. It is speculated that the United Golfers Association was in its decline and that record keeping and media obligations were in disarray. It appears as if the United Golfers Association also had difficulty in reporting the results from the national tournaments held in the Caribbean Islands. This delay may have caused some press deadlines to miss publication schedules. Again, another mother lode of information is lost in the history of African American golf.


51. “Thomas Takes UGA Pro Title; Select Chicago For 1960 Meet.” *Chicago Defender*, September 19, 1959, 24. Elizabeth Rice (McNeal) is second to Ethel Funches.


**Chapter 12: Nineteenth Hole**


LPGA. “History of The LPGA. 50 Years of Growth, Tradition and Excellence.” http://www.lpga.com/history/content.


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