

Friday, July 8th

DANVERS -- William J. ("Bill") Flynn, NEPGA Professional and Hall of Fame Member, who overcame a partially paralyzed right arm from birth to become an icon in North Shore and New England golf circles, died at home, surrounded by family. The devoted husband for 53 years of Janice (McCormick) Flynn was 74.

Flynn's life in golf started as a 10-year-old caddy at United Shoe Country Club (now Beverly Golf and Tennis Club). He fell in love with the game at first sight. At 18 he took an assistant golf professional/caddymaster position at Salem Country Club, then became head golf professional at the newly-opened Thomson CC in North Reading in 1963.

Owner of Lakeview Golf Course in Wenham, Far Corner Golf Course in West Boxford and the Windham Country Club in Windham, NH, he was immensely proud of the fact that three of his children became Golf Professionals, Michael, Bob and Joanne. His other child, Janna, owns and operates Lanes End Farm in Danvers.

After winning his first major tournament, the 1959 Vermont Open, his career took off. In 1963, Flynn became the first – and only – left-handed golfer to win the Massachusetts Open, staging one of the most impressive Arnold Palmer-like charges in Open history. Flynn, competing at Kernwood CC in Salem, scored 71-74-66 for a 211 total to secure the title. He then went on to win the 1968 New England PGA Championship at Pine Brook, where a 67 first round gave him a five-stroke advantage he never relinquished. His 139 total made him a five-shot winner.

Serving on the executive committee New England P.G.A. for seven years, then assuming the duties of secretary-treasurer for three years under another Massachusetts golf legend, Paul Harney, then succeeding Harney as the organization's president from 1973 to 1976. He and Harney are credited with bringing the NEPGA into a new era, during which time the NEPGA became the first PGA Section in the United States to hire a fulltime executive director (George Wemyss). Flynn also served as a vice-president of the National PGA and returned as NEPGA secretary-treasurer for 1983 and 1984. He was inducted into the NEPGA Hall of Fame in 1998.

Flynn's entrepreneurial skills also served him well in his management company's rejuvenation of two ailing municipal courses owned by the city of Boston – Franklin Park (also called William J. Devine) in Dorchester and George Wright in Hyde Park. He also operated Mount Hood Golf Course in Melrose and Ipswich Country Club for a time.

"Owning and managing golf courses is the best thing I've done," Flynn said in *The Green and Gold Coast*. I always enjoyed getting people involved with the game, working in the game. Nothing gave me more satisfaction."

Flynn ran his management company with a benevolent, hands-on approach for decades despite a series of health setbacks over the years that would have forced others in a similar situation to retire. Heart attacks, strokes and Flynn continued to manage the business and visit his three courses on a daily basis until just a few years ago.

Flynn also groomed an army of young men who carried on the club professional business , including two men who later became NEPGA presidents like himself, Jim Tobin, long-6++time head professional at Bellevue Golf Club in Melrose, and Don Lyons, head professional at Reedy Meadow and King Rail Reserve, both in Lynnfield.

Flynn promoted junior golf at all his clubs and courses, offering free junior clinics, free equipment and free play time on his layouts for youths and beginners of all ages.

He was a promoter of tournament golf, founding the North Shore Amateur in 1978, an event that runs every August at Far Corner.

His contributions to the game earned him the Number 1 ranking in “The North Shore’s Golden Hundred,” the one hundred men and women who best represented North Shore golf with distinction in the region and beyond, 1893-2001, published in *The Green and Gold Coast*.

He leaves, in addition to his wife Janice, his son and daughter in law, Michael and Kim Flynn of South Hamilton, his son and his companion, Bob Flynn and Lisa Mallard of Danvers, his daughter Joanne of Salem, NH and his daughter and her companion, Janna Flynn and Leif Rochna. Granddaughters Jordan Rochna of Danvers and Kyra Flynn of Dracut.

His funeral will be held on Wednesday, July 13 at 10 am at St. Richards Church in Danvers. Visiting hours will be Tuesday, July 12 from 3pm – 8pm at Lyons Funeral home in Danvers.

In lieu of flowers contributions can be made to the Salem Animal Rescue League in Salem, NH or the Food Pantry in Danvers, Ma.