



Stormin' Norm Jackson
Honoured with
Chamber's Lifetime Achievement
Award for 2018



And I just think it's part of our lot in life, I truly believe that you have to give back. And giving is selfless giving. You're doing it so someone feels better, or is being given an opportunity to be better – you're giving them a leg up.

Norm Jackson



Photo Credit: Andrew Leong, Arbutus

Norm Jackson makes excellence look easy. With a genuine smile, athlete's demeanor, and honest laugh, Jackson has a contained energy that's focused entirely on whoever he's talking to. A familiar MC and auctioneer, Jackson is the voice of fundraising for the Cowichan Hospital Foundation, Cowichan Valley Golfers Against Cancer, Cowichan Women Against Violence and others. As General Manager and Head Pro at the Cowichan Golf Club, Jackson and his team have twice earned the PGA Best Golf Shop of the Year in BC, along with a continuous roll call of industry recognitions.

Norm was born in Edmonton, but grew up in Penticton and Kamloops. He has two sisters - Jacqueline who lives in Vancouver and Cat calls Penticton home. Jackson's son Bob lives in Vancouver with his wife and a son and daughter. Norm's partner of eight years is Barb Failler who owns Granny's Gas and Woodstoves in Duncan.

The family patriarch is Bob "Bush" Jackson, who at 90 is living independently in Penticton. Jackson senior was a professional hockey player with Pacific Coast League through the 1940's. He was with the Minneapolis Millers when the team won the United States League title. He completed his career playing for the Vancouver Canucks in the 1950/51 season.

But summers in Penticton clearly loan themselves to golf and Norm started caddying for his father in 1962. A natural athlete, Norm quickly took to the game, but also to the easy camaraderie of club culture. "That's what attracted me to the game," he says. "People wanted to be there. You get to be social every day. So it's not like going to work."

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Norm joined the PGA in 1969 and by 1980 was the Assistant Golf Pro at the Edmonton Country Club. He held similar positions at other clubs and settled in as the Head Golf Pro at the Cowichan Golf and Country Club in 1990. In 1993, he added General Manager to his portfolio. That was the same year Norm was honoured as the BC PGA Pro of the year.

Back in Penticton, the Jacksons were a hockey family and Norm's mother was a generous volunteer. Community commitment and giving back were second nature. As a professional, Norm found himself in an industry that is well positioned to support causes and tuned in to community values. The Cowichan Golf and Country Club is solidly behind Norm's volunteering and embraces his penchant for giving.

Norm states, "If we say we want to do this charity event, or we want to promote an outside event – like the North American Indigenous Games, the Club allows us to do that. They are also very progressive because they know that if we put our best foot forward - and we have a wonderful facility - they realize it's also good for our business. We're pretty lucky that way."

Norm has volunteered for two decades for both the Cowichan Hospital Foundation and Cowichan Valley Golfers Against Cancer. He's been the auctioneer for the Cowichan Valley Hospice Golf Tournament for eight years. He's also MC'd the Alzheimer's Walk for Memories and the Cowichan Sports Wall of Fame to benefit Kid Sport. Three years ago, a colleague asked him to MC the first annual fundraising gala for Cowichan Women Against Violence – and he's done it every year since. "It's a great cause. It was an easy one to get involved with. We all probably have friends who have been affected by family violence."

As an MC, Norm's work starts well before he steps onto the stage. A gracious host, he strolls the room, welcoming and connecting with guests. At the same time, he's getting a sense of the room, gleaned comments and nuances to use later at the microphone. This helps Norm charm, coax, cajole and challenge guests to bid ever higher – directing money towards local causes.

"You know, the exciting bit is to just to be able to stand up in front of people. A sense of humour keeps it light. I look out and you see these people having a great time. More importantly, having been part of the community for 27 years, you know pretty much everyone."

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At the Cowichan Golf and Country Club, Norm is most likely to be found in the Pro Shop. “Yes, that’s my little hang out. I love being there.” He oversees a team of 14 – from fellow golf pros to junior staff just starting out. Norm sees listening as the foundation of leadership. He credits his upbringing for his open-minded, non-judgmental approach. “By listening you don’t immediately become a ‘fixer’. And you start to realize that the best listening is not talking.” He adds with a chuckle, “And learning to button your lip.”



Photo Credit: Andrew Leong, Arbutus

Jackson is proud to have mentored many young people in their golf careers, three of whom, including his son Bob, went on to senior positions in the industry. Jackson notes that working at a golf club is an excellent start for young people. A very social environment, golf clubs are the perfect place to develop customer service acumen and confidence. Norm also makes himself available to mentor young people interested in a golf career.

As part of the PGA group on Vancouver Island, Norm taught in the Golf Management program at Camosun College. He encouraged students to add a fourth year of studies and attain a Bachelor of Commerce – opening even more possibilities.

Jackson had mentors along the way, including BC Golf Hall of Fame’s Bob Kidd (Posthumously inducted). He cherishes what he learned about golf, its traditions, and how to carry himself as a professional. “A lot of it was just sitting talking with them. You just learn so much hearing their stories.”

When “Stormin’” Norm thinks about the future, he plans to continue his community commitment, and would like to expand opportunities for young people. “Start to think outside the box,” he says. “How do we get businesses up and going that are vibrant and economically sound and can pay to keep people here? That’s something I can see being a part of.”

With more than 30 years experience in the golf industry, multiple awards, community connections and charmingly gregarious, Norms will continue to be an ambassador – not only for the game of golf – but also for Cowichan which he loves, and the many good causes he champions.