

## Jerry Blagg – ZDGA Hall of Fame 2024

Born and raised in West Virginia, Jerry was awarded several accolades for his athletic and academic excellence while at Salem High School. He earned varsity letters in basketball and baseball, even playing varsity as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader. He was also Class of 1961 valedictorian. Jerry earned a BS degree in mechanical engineering and MBA from West Virginia University.

Jerry and his wife of 61 years, Sheila, and their three children migrated to Michigan in 1971 where he worked as an engineer. In 1977 Jerry moved his family to New Concord after the purchase of Taylor Terrace Golf Course. The course was renamed Wildfire Golf Club where Jerry, alongside his wife, served as owner/operator for nearly 40 years. They sold the course in 2016. Jerry also taught mechanical engineering at MATC, now Zane State, and retired as a professor in 2001.

Ever present, Jerry was truly a hands-on operator. Not only did he manage the business side of ownership, but also served as superintendent and groundskeeper, mechanic, club repairer, handicap calculator, rules official, league secretary, coach, and mentor. Jerry took great pride in growing many leagues over the years, especially youth golf. Young golfers came from all over Ohio to participate in the annual Wildfire Youth Golf Tournament. He graciously accommodated students and teams in the East Muskingum School District as Wildfire was the home course for John Glenn High School and East Muskingum Middle School. Several championship teams and individuals, including Jerry's son Lance and ZDGA hall of fame players Paul Christopher, Todd Hixson, and Lori Bubenchik, walked the fairways over the years as the Muskies became the premier program in the league. He was honored to work with several coaches during his tenure including the legendary Bill Hammer and ZDGA hall of famers Al Christopher, Jim Vejsicky, Mike Durant, Chad Orecchio, and Lori and Rich Bubenchik.

Too numerous to name, Jerry and Sheila formed lifelong friendships over the years with club members, playing partners, and employees. They both participated in leagues at Wildfire Golf Club and Jerry still plays in the Tuesday Morning Senior League. Having three holes-in-one in his playing career, at the age of 80, Jerry's proudest playing moment was finding the elusive albatross in 2023.