

2021 Special Awards Candidate Bio Form

Email address *

iziska@americandunesgolfclub.com

Name of Nominee: *

Ian Ziska, PGA

Facility Employed at: *

American Dunes Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2002

Award Nominated for: *

Patriot Award

Briefly describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award: *

A short time ago, I was asked to join a new club that I knew very little about, which was still in the infant development stages. While there were many unknowns, the group of extraordinary people involved with this new project made a choice simple, as I joined the team, and accepted the position of Head Golf Professional at American Dunes Golf Club.

Little time passed before I truly understood the mission at hand and the responsibility to make sure our team delivered. In March 2019, construction began on an exceptional golf facility, which will provide an extraordinary experience in life through golf. With Lt Col Dan Rooney at the helm, and with Jack Nicklaus leading the course design team, the galvanizing mission began to build a golf course that would forever stand as a tribute to our military and commemorate the birthplace of The Folds of Honor.

American Dunes transcends golf, serving as a safe haven for veterans who find solace and rehabilitation through the game's recreation and a backdrop to celebrate God, country, and our military, without apology.

Proudly, 100% of American Dunes annual profit will be given to the Folds of Honor Foundation. The funds will assist in the noble mission of providing educational scholarships to spouses and children of America's fallen and disabled service members. Together we will honor their sacrifice and educate their legacy.

Being involved with such a special group of patriots has allowed me to expand my interaction with active and retired members of the armed services. To be a part of a place with such an intense passion and focus on honoring America's heroes and sacrifices, while having the responsibility to assemble a team that will provide a unique and unforgettable experience to so many patriots and supporters of the Folds of Honor.

I smile when asked; what do you do while the golf course is closed. Over the past few seasons, I have been actively supporting our mission. I developed a program offered to the Big Rapids Community, leading a group of FSU PGA Golf Management Students that included a Folds of Honor scholarship recipient, coaching golf to area kids. The "Kid's for Folds Youth Golf Program" focused on developing youth golfers' skills and educating them about the Folds of Honor and its essential mission. With the support of the kids, their families, and other incredible people in the Big Rapids Community, the program was extremely successful. Its success allowed the program to provide a monetary donation to the Michigan Chapter of the Folds of Honor.

As construction continued, my duties expanded to include social media marketing and promotion, overseeing the retail operation, national supporter recruitment, and employment opportunities. With our inaugural season approaching, I'm actively recruiting to assemble a team, including several PGA Professionals I was privileged to mentor on their way to employment in the golf industry. One of our first hires was our PGA Assistant Golf Professional. This individual is an Army Veteran and a former member of the Katke staff that I was fortunate to mentor, who attended Ferris State University and the PGA Golf Management Program, following tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

While I feel so fortunate to have landed at American Dunes, I am fully aware of the responsibility to uphold our mission, continue to support Folds of Honor, and lead a team to provide an extraordinary experience to American Patriots from all over this great country. I look forward to our inaugural season, where we will take flight and showcase a remarkable Jack Nicklaus Signature Design at the birthplace of the Folds of Honor.

Thank you for the opportunity to share. I am humbled and grateful for the nomination for this very special award.

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