

2023 Special Awards Candidate Bio Form

Please send this form back no later Friday, October 21, 2022.

If you were nominated for more than one award you must **submit a bio form for each award.**

Email *

iziska@americandunesgolfclub.com

Name of Nominee: *

Ian Ziska

Award Nominated for: *

Merchandiser of the Year - Public

Facility Employed at: *

American Dunes Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

2001

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

IAN ZISKA, PGA - MERCHANDISER OF THE YEAR - PUBLIC

I take tremendous pride in retailing, and it's an area of my job I have a ton of fun doing. I enjoy being creative and thinking of new and different ways to implement ideas, style, and design. I will try anything, willing to buy without the fear of failing or missing a target.

The retail operation at American Dunes began in May 2020, following the launch of our online shop. Shop.americandunesgolfclub.com provided an avenue for supporters and shoppers from afar interested in supporting our brand while the golf course was under construction. Relying heavily on our web presence and social media outlets, we successfully promoted and showcased "The Most Patriotic Gear in Golf," where 2020 retail sales exceeded \$250,000.

Our inaugural season began in May 2021, with forecasted annual retail sales of \$600,000. On July 7, 2021, only sixty-six days into our inaugural season, we surpassed our budgeted yearly target. Following several re-forecasts, our annual sales in 2021 exceeded all projections with \$1.5 million in sales. As we took flight in season two, sales continued, as our retail operation is heavily supported by visiting guests from across the country, in person and online. To date, we are projecting retail sales to surpass 2021.

I am incredibly proud of our efforts and the results we have seen thus far, and I'm excited about our future. Retail success at American Dunes is vital and will directly contribute to the support of our mission. I will continue to use creative ideas, implement proper training, and focus on customer satisfaction to remain successful. In addition, we will continue to strive to sell quality inventory that creates buzz, turns fast, and has "in your face" Americana, sought out by our national supporters, guests, and visiting military service members.

While I am the lead in retail at American Dunes, I would be remiss if I didn't thank my team for their effort and support. I also must acknowledge the sales representatives I work closely with, as these individuals have greatly assisted our success as we faced so many industry challenges.

I am thankful to have been previously recognized by my peers for this special award. I'm honored to have an opportunity to share my new experiences and help fellow PGA Professionals with best practices in golf retail.

Thank you again.

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Email *

jabbergolf@aol.com

Name of Nominee: *

Dean Marks

Award Nominated for: *

Merchandiser of the Year - Public

Facility Employed at: *

Milham Park Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: *

1997

Please describe your achievements/accomplishments that would pertain to this award. *

Milham Park Golf Club in Kalamazoo has a long history of selling quality merchandise at discount prices and I'm happy to continue the tradition. Milham Park is one of the few green grass shops that has been able to thrive despite the strong competition with the online market.

The pro shop at Milham Park is known for a large shoe selection and regularly keeps over 600 pair in stock. We also have clubs, clothing, and accessories from dozens of companies. Maintaining a large inventory means customers can try before they buy, which is a critical component to competing with the online market. Having a large inventory in which participants can happily spend their gift certificates has also increased our outings and tournaments business, adding greatly to the overall financial health of the facility. Our staff is trained to talk knowledgably about our products, helping us compete with the big-box stores. We maintain strong relationships with our vendors and sales reps to assure we are always offering the best product at the best prices.

The retail market is tough, but Milham Park is strong yet agile enough to adapt to the market's desires as needed. We added our Golf Performance Academy in 2014 to increase our custom club fitting sales and opened a ski shop inside the pro shop in 2020 after the area's only local ski shop closed over the summer. Ski Shop sales the first winter surpassed \$200,000, exceeding any expectations we had while selling through 95% of the inventory. Ski sales doubled to \$400,000 in 2021 and are projected to be even higher in 2022. Techniques learned through selling skis carried over to golf, where golf merchandise sales are expected to exceed \$475,000 – a 40% increase over 2020.

I appreciate your consideration for this award.

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