

# 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 \*

CJVANDENBERG54@GMAIL.COM

Name of Nominee: \*

Charley Vandenberg

Award Nominated for: \*

Professional Development

Facility Employed at: \*

Vandenberg Golf Academy

Year Elected to Membership: \*

1981

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

As I approach the last few holes of my PGA career, I am thankful to be considered for an award which reflects career-long educational efforts for the betterment of my fellow professionals, my Section and my own capabilities.

Education has always been the top priority during my journey. Spanning almost 50 years, I have traveled cross-country to absorb the best instruction in a quest to share what I've learned with my students and compatriots. I have personally observed top instructors including Bob Toski, Jim Flick, Jim McLean, Mike Hebron, Dr. Gary Wiren, Gardner Dickinson, Peter Kostis, David Leadbetter (6 years), Mike Shannon (16 years) and Mike Bender (28 years). At one juncture, I had attended more National PGA Workshops than any other member and was listed as "PGA Most Dedicated Student" in our National newsletter.

Endeavoring to impart some of this information, I served multiple years on the Michigan Section Education Committee as chairman, vice-chairman, and member. I chaired the Michigan Teaching Summit in 2019 and was on the committee for the inaugural Teaching Summit in 2009. Through these appointments, I have conceptualized, coordinated, and implemented Section workshops spanning vast areas of expertise for membership benefit including noted instructors Mike Bender, Mike Shannon, Jim McLean, and Dr. Gary Wiren. Additional activities include multiple presentations for Ferris PGM students and West Michigan Golf Show attendees as well as crafting various instructional videos and written articles for both state and national associations and publications.

I hope to have elevated the image of our profession through additional efforts. I recently served on the Special Awards Committee, completing my ninth year in 2021. My most meaningful accomplishment was the "Golf Marathon of Hope." Beginning in 1997, I played 400+ holes annually - in 24 continuous hours - an event raising over \$500,000 for a local West Michigan homeless shelter (retiring due to injury). Finally, I have served as a committee member and participant in many charity golf events as well as continuing to support homeless shelters in multiple ways.

I appreciate your consideration of my qualifications for this award!

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Email \*

jrichter@boyne.com

Name of Nominee: \*

Josh Richter

Award Nominated for: \*

Professional Development Award

Facility Employed at: \*

Boyne Resorts

Year Elected to Membership: \*

2005

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

Josh Richter has been a PGA Professional for 17 years, spending the entirety of his career at Boyne Resorts since 1999. In his tenure as a Head Professional, he was the recipient of the Merchandiser of the Year for the Northern Chapter in 2012. In his current role as Senior VP of Golf overseeing all 13 BOYNE Golf courses nationwide including the Boyne Golf Academy, he has hired and/or promoted over 15 Assistant and Head Professionals as well as Director of Instruction and has helped develop future careers for over 35 PGM student interns, the majority hired from his alma mater Ferris State University. For the past seven years, Josh has been active as a board member for First Tee-Northern Michigan as well as serving as Golf Committee Fundraiser Tournament Chair and helping the program not only grow in numbers, but also provide a place for students to learn and develop their game at The Highlands. Through his involvement with the Harbor Cup Fund, over \$800,000 has been raised for local charities since its inception 26 years ago including raising a record donation, over 135,000 which in part supports First Tee-Northern Michigan. His dedication to the PGA thrives, as his relationship between the Michigan PGA and GAM remain mutually beneficial for the game of golf as BOYNE Golf hosts numerous tournaments annually. Josh excels outside the golf community as well by donating his time to volunteering at Manna Food Project and local schools. Thank you for consideration, humbled by the nomination.

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

Email \*

kyle@kalamazoocc.com

Name of Nominee: \*

Kyle Horton

Award Nominated for: \*

Professional Development Award

Facility Employed at: \*

Kalamazoo Country Club

Year Elected to Membership: \*

2009

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

During my time at Kalamazoo Country Club, I have focused my efforts on continuing education to help better not only myself, but other PGA Professionals around me. Enrolling in training seminars such as the Leadership Accelerator Program with GBN or the Dale Carnegie Effective Communications and Human Relations course have been a huge benefit to me and my efforts to be a better leader and mentor. In addition to these courses, Kalamazoo Country Club serves as the host facility for the First Tee of Southwest Michigan with youth clinics, play days, and lessons occurring from April - October this year. This program engages over 300+ youth annually in the Kalamazoo area and PGA staff at KCC leads the effort to give these kids a positive experience.

Furthermore, I have had articles published by PGA Magazine in December of 2021 that covered both best practices and multi-layered marketing. These articles were written to give fellow PGA professionals new insights, ideas, and thoughts into different processes to be used at their Clubs. In response to these articles, I received numerous emails from PGA Professionals around the country inquiring on methods and processes used in the Golf Shop and with the PGA Staff at Kalamazoo Country Club.

Moreover, in addition to these articles, training courses, and programs I focus extremely hard on developing relationships with fellow professionals. Attending Chapter & Section meetings, being a part of the Western Chapter Board (current President), engaging in round table discussion groups (Pat Markley facilitated), and attending merchandise shows throughout the State and Nation have all contributed to building a strong network of contacts within the PGA. These networking efforts were influential in my nomination to serve on the National Johnnie-O Ambassador Board with 15 other Professionals nationwide as well as assisted former PGA Assistants Ty Bouwens, Jimmy Liss, and Cody Sinkler in moving on to promoted jobs at other facilities.

Professional development has been a strong part of my career ever since I worked alongside Dick Stewart for 10 years. Dick was influential in my career from Day 1 and I strive every day to have that same impact on not only the PGA Professionals at KCC, but everyone I meet.

I'm extremely honored to be considered for this award and thank you for your time and consideration.

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

Email \*

cmsob2@gmail.com

Name of Nominee: \*

Chris Sobieck

Award Nominated for: \*

Professional Development

Facility Employed at: \*

Mines Golf Club

Year Elected to Membership: \*

1997

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

The nominee was elected to membership November 1997, has been a PGA Member for 25 years, and has worked with a significant amount of PGA members and aspiring members. In March of 2021 Chris started High Road Golf Management and purchased Mines Golf Club in Grand Rapids.

Five years prior to the Mines, the nominee was the General Manager of Watermark Properties (now RedWater) which had 7 golf facilities (4 private, 2 daily fee, and 1 semi-private). Within the organization he managed 22 PGA members and apprentices. Chris worked with and communicated directly with these individuals to help understand and guide their career paths. Chris works hard on helping with personal and professional development with all former Professionals that he has worked with which now numbers in the 30's. Chris's experience in the industry has led to long term relationships with other PGA Golf Professionals who Chris helps advise on operations, procedures, and career development. During this time period many former employees have gone on to enter careers as PGA Members or move on to other opportunities that the PGA has offered, including: National PGA employee, Head Collegiate Golf Coach, and Head Golf Professionals, National club fitters, Sales representatives within the golf industry, as well as many who have become very successful in other career paths. Chris speaks almost weekly with former employees regarding their current and future career plans and helps advise any Professional that reaches out.

Honesty, loyalty, accountability, putting others ahead of himself, and self-sacrifice are all characteristics the nominee constantly tries to live up to and be an active example of these principles. Chris makes every effort to try to impress upon others he leads the importance of these values. By leading by example and showing others that people can be successful through hard work and sacrifice have always been characteristics practiced by the nominee. Chris has been a positive example of what a PGA Member is as he works with his High School and College golf teams. Chris is the Head Golf Coach for Forest Hills Central's JV Girls Golf Team and is also the Assistant Coach for the 2022 GLIAC Champion Men's Golf team at Davenport University.

Chris was the 2021 Bill Strausbaugh award winner for the Michigan PGA Section and was also a two-time Director of the Michigan Section and served as the employment chairman (2013-2016) and now currently serves as a Board Member with the Michigan Golf Course Association. In 2020, Chris started as a committee member with the MGCOPA to help their organization on their education and planning, helping further the importance of the PGA Member.

Chris was a former Partner/Owner of Thornapple Pointe prior to selling the operation to Watermark Properties and becoming the General Manager of their 7 facilities and working with so many PGA members. Part of the motivation to sell Thornapple to Watermark was the opportunity to help guide and help share the experiences and work with other PGA Members within the organization and beyond. With experience as the chair of the employment committee for 4 years and working closely with Tim Marks, the CareerLinks consultant, reaching out and working with employers and potential employees was very rewarding and eye opening on what we need to do as potential hires and also working with potential employers.

As mentioned above, Chris is both a High School golf coach for girl's golf and an Assistant Coach for the Davenport Men's golf team. Chris uses both avenues to try and create a positive influence and be a positive role model to both demographics. Chris has worked many PGA organized teaching opportunities, including local golf shows, and beginner clinics associated with the PGA Senior Championship. Chris also developed both ladies and junior programs at several facilities leading to growth and awareness of golf and its caretakers the PGA Professional. In 2020, Chris also started a non-profit charitable corporation designed around raising funds through golf events. With the Purchase of the Mines in early 2021, Chris has partnered with the West Michigan Chapter of the First Tee and has started a new Junior Program at the Mines. This year Chris and his wife volunteered for the Drive, Chip, and Putt sub-regional that was hosted at the Mines. Growing the game and exposing as many new players to the game is one of the featured goals for Chris at the Mines.

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