

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 *

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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