



Founders Scholarship Fund HISTORY

The creation and launch of The Founders Fund by the Founding Board of Governors in 1991 was one of its most meaningful accomplishments.

As part of the negotiation settlement, Westinghouse agreed to refund the PGA's costs as related to legal, accounting and administrative expenses. This amounted to a total of \$83,000. Amongst a variety of startup issues confronting the new Board was the issue of what to do with the "war chest" reimbursement. In as much as the war chest had been generated by \$200 contributions made by each PGA member, one school of thought was simply to refund each member of the PGA the amount of their contribution. This could have been easily accomplished as detailed accounting records of their contributions had been kept. The "refund" concept never gained any support from the Board.

Another school of thought was to use these funds to serve the community in some philanthropic way and while there had been some uncertainty as to what an appropriate vehicle would be, there was no uncertainty regarding a refund. The Board was unanimous in its decision – to escrow the funds and give serious thought as to their future use in serving The CLUB and the community.

It was at a Pelican Bay Beach Sand Bar sunset dinner attended by the Harfords and the Biondos that the idea of a scholarship program was suggested by Jean Harford. Using the Woodway

Country Club in Darien Connecticut, volunteered to research their scholarship program and report to the Board as to the details of its program and how it was being administered.

By early March, based on glowing reports and confirmation of the success of the Woodway Country Club program, the Board enthusiastically voted to establish a scholarship program to be named “The Founders Fund” in honor of the Founding members of The Club. Mickey Biondo was assigned the responsibility of shaping its initial mission and to recruit a CLUB member to “chair” the startup.

The CLUB Board felt strongly that The Founders Fund needed to be established as a separate entity with its own Board and decision-making capability. The legal and accounting issues associated with charitable “not-for-profit” status required an “arm’s length” organizational structure. However, it was the Founding Board’s desire that the genesis of The Founders Fund would be remembered as an outgrowth of the generosity of the membership of The CLUB Pelican Bay, and that while it would function as an independent charitable organization, The Founders Fund would always be an integral part of the philosophy and social fabric of The CLUB, and supported by 100% of its membership. Based on this understanding, activity to organize the launch began.

Robert H. “Rocky” Caldwell was appointed by the Club Board to become the first Chairman of The Founders Fund. A letter was sent to all PGA members asking them to transfer their contributions to the new Founders Fund or request a refund. Only one CLUB member asked for a refund. With this endorsement, work began to officially establish The Founders Fund.

Appointed to the first Board of Directors were: Edward J. Brennan, Jean Harford and Robert Lee. Bob Lee, a founding member of The Club Board, represented The CLUB Board and acted as its liaison. On April 22, 1992, The Founders Fund, Inc. was organized as a “Not-For-Profit Florida Corporation” and by March 22nd contributions had reached \$100,000, from its 476 members.

Originally, in its startup year, the awards program called for scholarships to further the education of employees and to be awarded to children of CLUB employees. This was to change and on July 20, 1992 the first scholarship recipients were announced: Paul Hineman, Senior, Palm Beach Atlantic College, son of Carol Hineman, Membership Secretary of The CLUB; Marissa Keeble, Sophomore, University of West Florida, daughter of Diana Keeble, CLUB waitress; and Karl Mueller, sophomore, Rollins College, son of Mary Mueller, CLUB waitress. Each scholarship amounted to \$2,500 for one year.

During the 1992-1993 season, work proceeded to qualify The Founders Fund, Inc. as being exempt from federal income taxes under 501©3 of the Internal Revenue Code. IRS approval was granted on May 28, 1993 to qualify as a “public” foundation as opposed to a “private” foundation. This qualification necessitated changes in the administration of The Fund.

Scholarship awards had to include students other than members of The CLUB family. Awards based on financial “need” limited family income of recipients to 80% of the median income for

Collier County families. At the time, the medium income for Collier County was about \$33,000. Scholarship awards could be based on either “need” or “academic achievement.” Academic achievement was established as a “B” average or better. The Board was expanded to include Cheryl Cullen, Gordon MacKenzie, Gene Mayberry and David Smith.

Also, during the 1993 season, three scholarships were awarded to members of The CLUB family and additional scholarships, in the amount of \$1,000 each, were awarded to students from each of the six Collier County High Schools.

From its beginning, the policy of The Founders Fund has been to award scholarships for one year only. As a safeguard to avoid any future financial commitments, The Founders Board felt it was prudent not to guarantee that future or extended awards would be made. It was established however, that recipients would be permitted to apply for continuing assistance during their undergraduate years based on performance. In 1993, a solicitation letter to Club members resulted in 429 contributions totaling \$35,000.

On March 20 and 21, 1994, the first Founders Fund Golf tournament, banquet and raffle event was held. Ed Brennan, who first suggested the idea, served as Co-Chairman along with Cheryl Cullen for the fundraiser. The membership of The CLUB rallied in enthusiastic support as plans for a two-day event took shape. Various committees were formed to manage the golf tournament, the banquet, the prizes and fundraising raffle. Gordon MacKenzie’s senior corporate status at the Ford Motor Company was able to secure as a prize -- the reintroduced and newly designed Ford Mustang as a free year lease along with four Lincolns as hole-in-one prizes. Mackenzie, along with the help of Jack Shireling and Rocky Caldwell and many members of The CLUB, were able to amass an exceptional raffle prize list. Harriet Biondo and Jean Harford co-chaired the raffle committee that sold \$46,000 worth of tickets. Cheryl Cullen and Cordette Empson co-chaired the banquet arrangements.

A logo was created by Allison M. Caldwell, a professional graphics and interior designer, illustrating The CLUB’s “pelican mascot” draped in a cap and gown, and carrying a golf club. The logo became a popular symbol of the event.

The 1994 fundraiser was a tremendous success and succeeded not only in raising a total of \$71,000 for The Fund but, most importantly bringing The CLUB’s membership together as a family. A true “sense of Club” was established amongst the new membership. The combination of a golf tournament followed by a banquet and raffle which included luxury cars, accommodations at vacation resorts, both, domestic and international set the format for future years of fundraising events.

The Board also continued to expand in 1994 and added members Bob Gimlin, Tom Holmes and Bob Nevins. That year, six new scholarships were awarded as well as, continuing scholarships for six students who had received scholarships previously.

As the years have passed, those who served as Chairman and those who served on the various Boards of The Founders Fund have pursued the vision established by The CLUB's Founding Board, namely – *that The Founders Fund would always be an integral part of the philosophy and social fabric of The CLUB – supported by 100% of the membership.*

In 1995, a banquet dinner and raffle were held without accompanying golf tournament. Golfing returned in 1996, and it was established that The Founders Fund Golf Tournament and Dinner would take place as an “every other year” charity event. Fundraiser events were held in 1998 and 2000, however, CLUB members were solicited for contributions on an annual basis.

With each passing year, The Fund's ability to raise money has grown. From its simple beginnings in 1992 serving a few employees of The CLUB and their dependents, and six of the Collier County High Schools, the scholarship reach of The Fund was expanded to include all eight Collier County High Schools.

Funds awarded is an outstanding accomplishment unmatched by any other golf club in Southwest Florida. The Founders Fund stands alone in its service to the community. Its unique accomplishment serves as a continuing source of pride for the membership of The CLUB Pelican Bay.

In 2009, outside assistance was hired to help create a marketing presence for The Founders Fund. A website was created, and outside businesses were solicited to help sponsor the golf event.

In 2015, the Founders Scholarship Endowment Fund was formed to help ensure sustainability for the organization. The driving force behind the formation of the Endowment Fund began with a very generous contribution from Karen and Bill Pulte. Over the succeeding three years, a challenge match was established and in 2018, Karen Pulte had donated one-million dollars. With the help of other donors, plus a commitment by every member of The Founders Scholarship Fund Board of Trustees to donate to the Endowment, we now have a \$1.6 million Fund. With this growth, we expect to provide even more deserving students of Collier County (FL) the opportunity to continue their pursuit of post high school education including, college degrees or technical training.

In 2019, the name of the Fund was changed to better reflect the organization's mission. The Founders Fund is now doing business as the Founders Scholarship Fund; a new logo was created to incorporate the new branded look of CLUB Pelican Bay which was changed at the same time as the completion of the CLUB's club house/facility.

This above document was created by E. Sue Huff and taken from old newsletter articles presumed to be written by Rocky Caldwell, and from current information in the Founders Fund files. – October 3, 2019

Chronological HISTORY – at a glance

The Founders Fund History



March 11, 1991

Letter to 443 charter members of The Club announced the board's desire to use member contributions to the Pelican Golf Association to create the Founders Fund as a non-profit charitable fund. Those contributions amounted to about \$85,000 from 396 members.

1991-1992 Season

Robert H. "Rocky" Caldwell appointed by the Club Board to become the first Chairman of the Founders Fund.

Letter sent to all PGA members asking them to choose between transferring their PGA contributions to the new Founders Fund or receiving a refund. Only one Club member asked for a refund. With this endorsement work began to officially establish the Founders Fund.

Formed the first Board of Directors:

Mr. Edward J. Brennan

Mr. Robert H. Caldwell, Chairman

Jean Harford

(Later Bob Lee was added as a representative from the Board of The Club)

April 28, 1992

The Founders Fund, Inc. was organized as a Not-For-Profit Florida Corporation.

May 22, 1992

Announced to members that contributions now were \$100,000 from 476 members.

July 20, 1992

First scholarship recipients announced:

Paul Hineman – Senior, Palm Beach Atlantic College (son of Carol Hineman, Membership Secretary at the Club)

Marissa Keeble – Sophomore, University of West Florida (daughter of Diana Keeble, Club Waitress)

Karl Mueller – Sophomore, Rollins College (son of Mary Mueller, Club Waitress)

Each scholarship amounted to \$2,500 for one year.

1992-1993 Season

Work proceeded to qualify the Founders Fund, Inc. as being exempt from Federal income tax under section 501 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501 (c) (3) and to qualify as a “public” (as opposed to “private” foundation.

IRS approval was granted on May 28, 1993 and necessitated these changes to the administration of the Founders Fund.

1. Scholarship awards had to include students other than members of the Club family.
2. Family income tests for awards based on need limited family income of recipients to 80% of the median income for Collier County families – about \$33,000 at that time.
3. Scholarship awards could be based on either “need” or “academic achievement.” Academic achievement was established as a “B” average or better.

The board was expanded to include:

Cheryl Cullen

Gordon MacKenzie

Gene Mayberry

Dave Smith

Three scholarships were awarded to members of the Club family and additional scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each were awarded to students from each of the six Collier County high schools.

From the beginning the policy of the Founders Fund has been to award scholarships for one year only. Recipients are permitted to apply for continuing assistance during their undergraduate years, but in order to avoid any future financial commitments there is no guarantee that future award will be made.

Solicitation letter to Club members in 1993 resulted in 429 contributions totaling \$35,000.

1993-1994 Season

First Founders Fund golf tournament banquet and raffle was conducted in February 1994. Ed Brennan who first suggested the idea served as Chairman for the event. The event raised a net of \$71,000 for the Fund.

Bob Gimlin, Tom Holmes and Bob Nevins joined the Founders Fund Board.

Six new scholarships were awarded as well as continuing scholarships for six students who had received scholarships previously.

1994-1995 Season

A fundraising event was held in February featuring a gourmet banquet and a raffle. (No golf tournament)

Cordette Empson and Dan Murphy joined the Board. Jean Harford resigned. Ed Brennan was elected Chairman, succeeding Rocky Caldwell.

Plans were set for event '96, another golf tournament, a banquet and raffle with Gordon MacKenzie as Event Chairman. Bette Young Joined the Board succeeding Tom Holmes as the Club Board Representative.

1995-1996 Season

Event '96 was a huge success, far exceeding the amount of money raised in 1994.

George Fox replaced Bette Young as the Club Board representative. Ray Fink, Tom McCausland, Don Nolte and Jack Shireling joined the Board. Dan Murphy Succeeded Ed Brennan as Chairman.

1996-1997 Season

Roy DeCamara, Tom Gibbons and Nora Monaghan joined the Board. A luncheon was held on December 30 to which 62 scholarship students were invited to attend along with Club and Fund Board members and Major Sponsors of Event '96.

Don Nolte was Named Chairman of Event '98.

1997-1998 Season

The Board joined with all the Club members in mourning the death of Nora Monaghan in the spring of 1998.

The first informal golf tournament dinner for Board members and spouses was organized under the chairmanship of Rocky Caldwell and Gordon MacKenzie.

Cheryl Cullen Continued with her outstanding service as Treasurer and her efforts at tracking the scholarship recipients and managing their awards. She reported that everyone of the first three scholarship recipients had now been graduated from college.

Event '98 raised \$133,000. By May of 1998 the Fund's balance was \$368,775.10.

Rocky Caldwell, Cordette Empson, and Bob Gimlin left the Board. Don Nolte became Chairman and Sandy Sarni and Bill Ferguson became new members. George Fox continued as regular Board member even though he was no longer serving on the Club Board.

1998-1999 Season

Gordon MacKenzie and Dan Murphy left the Board and Jay Levitt and Bob Lyle joined as new members.

A special scholarship fund was established with the generosity of Club Members to honor the memory of Al and Odette Tahmoush. The first two Tahmoush scholars were members of The Club family: Jim Petrovich and Rayna Wunnenberg.

1999-2000 Season

Fund balance as of Nov. 5, 1999 was \$263,206.

Event 2000, chaired by George Fox, was dedicated to the memory of Ed Brennan who died in the spring of 1999. The tournament was known as the Ed Brennan Memorial Tournament.

Cheryl Cullen resigned from the Board after many years of tremendous service to "her kids" as she calls the scholarship recipients. Cheryl not only served as treasurer but was also heavily involved with following the college careers of the students and organizing the annual December luncheon meeting with scholarship students and Club members. She worked hard on the planning and execution of all six of the fundraising banquets between 1992 and 2000 with excellent results. Her attention to detail and intimate knowledge of the scholarship program became legendary.

The Brennan family made a substantial gift to the Fund in order to establish a scholarship program in Ed's name.

2015 Season

The Founders Scholarship Endowment Fund was formed to help ensure sustainability for the organization.

2018 Season

Karen Pulte donated one-million dollars. With the help of other donors, plus a commitment by every member of The Founders Scholarship Fund Board of Trustees to donate to the Endowment, the fund grew to \$1.6 million.

2019 Season

The Board decided to change the name of The Founders Fund to the DBA: The Founders Scholarship Fund. A new logo was created to reflect the new CLUB logo and the mission of the fund.

Past Founders Fund Board Chairs

(This list was recreated from minutes from Rocky Caldwell and files from Founders Fund newsletters. This list is as accurate as we could find, some assumptions were made as board members were not documented for each year in the earlier years. If anyone has changes or edits, please feel free to let us know.)

1991-1992

Rocky Caldwell – Chairman
Edward Brennan
Jean Harford
Bob Lee

1992-1993

Rocky Caldwell – Chairman
Edward Brennan
Jean Harford
Bob Lee
Cheryl Cullen
Gordon MacKenzie
Gene Mayberry
Dave Smith

1993-1994

Rocky Caldwell – Chairman
Edward Brennan
Cheryl Cullen
Bob Gimlin
Jean Harford
Tom Holmes
Bob Lee
Gordon MacKenzie
Gene Mayberry
Bob Nevins
Dave Smith

1994-1995

Rocky Caldwell – Chairman
Edward Brennan
Cheryl Cullen
Bob Gimlin
Jean Harford
Tom Holmes

Bob Lee
Gordon MacKenzie
Gene Mayberry
Bob Nevins
Dave Smith
Bette Young

1995 - 1996

Edward Brennan - Chairman
Rocky Caldwell
Cheryl Cullen
Ray Fink
George Fox
Bob Gimlin
Tom Holmes
Bob Lee
Tom McCausland
Gordon MacKenzie
Gene Mayberry
Dan Murphy
Bob Nevins
Don Nolte
Dave Smith

1996-1997

Dan Murphy- Chairman
Edward Brennan
Rocky Caldwell
Cheryl Cullen
Roy DeCamara
Cordette Empson
Ray Fink
George Fox
Tom Gibbons
Bob Gimlin
Tom Holmes
Bob Lee
Tom McCausland
Gordon MacKenzie
Gene Mayberry
Norah Monaghan
Dan Murphy
Bob Nevins
Don Nolte

Dave Smith

1997 - 1998

Don Nolte - Chairman
Rocky Caldwell
Cheryl Cullen
Roy DeCamara
Bill Ferguson
Ray Fink
George Fox
Tom Gibbons
Tom Holmes
Bob Lee
Tom McCausland
Gordon MacKenzie
Gene Mayberry
Norah Monaghan
Dan Murphy
Bob Nevins
Don Nolte
Sandy Sarni
Dave Smith

1998 - 1999

Don Nolte - Chairman
Rocky Caldwell
Cheryl Cullen
Roy DeCamara
Bill Ferguson
Ray Fink
George Fox
Tom Gibbons
Tom Holmes
Bob Lee
Jay Levitt
Bob Lyle
Tom McCausland
Gene Mayberry
Norah Monaghan
Dan Murphy
Bob Nevins
Don Nolte
Sandy Sarni
Dave Smith

1999 - 2000

Don Nolte - Chairman
Rocky Caldwell
Roy DeCamara
Bill Ferguson
Ray Fink
George Fox
Tom Gibbons
Tom Holmes
Bob Lee
Jay Levitt
Bob Lyle
Tom McCausland
Gene Mayberry
Norah Monaghan
Dan Murphy
Bob Nevins
Don Nolte
Sandy Sarni
Dave Smith

2006 - 2007

Chris Carlson
Ray Crisci
Kay Drolet
John Frisvold
Larry Gutowsky
Bob Jachino
Clara Marks
Sue McNaghten
Katie Ogden
George Phillips
Bill Radford
Tim Ubben
Chris Zillig
Sue Davenport – Secretary
Harris Osborn - Chairman

2007 - 2008

Chris Carlson
Ray Crisci
Kay Drolet
John Frisvold

George Gibson
Larry Gutowsky
Bob Jachino
Clara Marks
Sue McNaghten
Katie Ogden
George Phillips
Brice Smith
Tim Ubben
James Walton
Sue Davenport – Secretary
Harry Osborn - Chairman

2008 - 2009

Ray Crisci, Chairman
Chris Carlson
Lee Dayton
Kay Drolet
Leo Flanagan
George Gibson, Treasurer
Coe Gutowsky
Jon Homstad
Wayne Kent
Tom Lear
Clara Marks
Tom McCarty
Sue McNaghten
Frank Morley
Katie Ogden

2009 - 2010

Ray Crisci, Chairman
George Gibson, Treasurer
Chris Carlson
Lee Dayton
Kay Drolet
Leo Flanagan
Coe Gutowsky
Jon Homstad
Wayne Kent
Tom Lear
Clara Marks
Tom McCarty
Sue McNaghten

Frank Morley
Gene Murphy
Pidge Weir

2010 - 2011

Sue McNaghten, Chairman
Chris Carlson
Lee Dayton
Kay Drolet
George Gibson, Treasurer
Coe Gutowsky
Wayne Kent
Tom Lear
John Levy
Tom McCarty
Frank Morley, Vice-Chairman
Gene Murphy
Schuyler Peck
Joan Thomas
Pidge Weir
Gerald O'Connor- Club Representative

2011 - 2012

Sue McNaghten, Chairman
Dick Censits
Lee Dayton
George Gibson, Treasurer
Coe Gutowsky
Wayne Kent
Tom Lear
John Levy
Mollie Moffatt
Frank Morley, Vice-Chairman
Gene Murphy
Maureen O'Gorman
Schuyler Peck
Joan Thomas
Pidge Weir

2012 - 2013

Tom Lear, Chairman
Rick Ermler, Treasurer
Karla Albanese
Dick Censits

Lee Dayton
Wayne Kent
John Levy
Rob McNaghten
Mollie Moffatt
Gene Murphy
Maureen O’Gorman
Schuyler Peck
Karen Pulte
Joan Thomas
Michael Weir, Board Rep.
Pidge Weir

2013 - 2014

Tom Lear- Chairman
Rick Ermler – Treasurer
Karla Albanese
Dick Censits
Lee Dayton
Wayne Kent
John Levy
Rob McNaghten
Mollie Moffatt
Gene Murphy
Maureen O’Gorman
Schuyler Peck
Karen Pulte
Joan Thomas
Michael Weir – Club Representative
Pidge Weir¹¹

2014 - 2015

Joan Thomas, Chairman
Rick Ermler, Treasurer
Karla Albanese
Susan Brown
Dick Censits
Jean Ensley
Michelle Farrell
John Levy
Peter McCarthy
Rob McNaghten
Mollie Moffatt
Maureen O’Gorman

Schuyler Peck
Karen Pulte
Meg Tyre
Michael Weir, Board Rep.

2015 - 2016

Joan Thomas, Chairman
Rick Ermler, Treasurer
Karla Albanese
Susan Brown
Dick Censits
Jean Ensley
Michelle Farrell
John Levy
Peter McCarthy
Rob McNaghten
Mollie Moffatt
Maureen O’Gorman
Schuyler Peck
Karen Pulte
Meg Tyre
Michael Weir, Board Rep.

2016 - 2017

Rob McNaghten – Chairman of Board of Trustees
Meg Tyre – Vice Chair
Tom Lear – Club Representative
Karla Albanese
Susan Brown
Dick Censits
Adam Crescenzi – Treasurer
Jean Ensley
Rick Ermler
Michele Farrell
Jim Marinelli
Peter McCarthy
Mollie Moffatt
Maureen O’Gorman
Karen Pulte
George Thomas

2017 - 2018

Rob McNaghten - Chairman of Board
Adam Crescenzi - Vice Chairman

Paul Duncan - Treasurer
Stacy Lee-Williams –Secretary*
Karla Albanese
Susan Brown
Jean Ensley
Rick Ermler
Michele Farrell
Tom Lear
Phil Leone
Jim Marinelli
Sue McNaghten
Jim O’Brien
Schuyler Peck
Karen Pulte
Cindy Schappert
George Thomas
Meg Tyre

2018 - 2019

Adam Crescenzi – Chairman
Paul Duncan – Treasurer
Stacy Lee-Williams – Secretary*
Susan Brown
Patricia Chadwick
Michelle Farrell
Tom Lear
Phil Leone
John Lord
Sue Luconi
Jim Marinelli
Sue McNaghten
Jim O’Brien
Cindy Schappert
George Thomas
Bob Tyre

* not a board member but is the Fund Administrator and Secretary of the Board

2019 - 2020

Adam Crescenzi - Chairman
Paul Duncan - Treasurer
Stacy Lee-Williams – Secretary*
Susan Brown

Pat Chadwick
Michele Farrell
Rich Gale
Phil Leone
John Lord
Sue Luconi
Sue McNaghten
Jim O'Brien
Olga Placeres
Elba Rodburg
Cindy Schappert
Ted Swan
Dawson Taylor
George Thomas
Bob Tyre
Meg Tyre

** not a board member but is the Fund Administrator and Secretary of the Board*

(This document has been created by: E. Sue Huff & Associates, Inc. – marketing consultant with the Founders Fund since 2009.)