

Distinguished Service Award



A Dynamic Duo

The winners of the MGA's Distinguished Service Award, Richard J. Cerame reports, have worked tirelessly for Met Area golf for more than three decades

Oliver and Eleanor Lazare have spent more than 30 years serving golf in the Metropolitan Area. Their emphasis on giving back to the game has made their names synonymous with the term "volunteer" and has earned them the Distinguished Service Award, the MGA's highest honor, for 2000.

They met at the tender age of nine, at school in New York City. The childhood sweethearts eventually became husband and wife, and the two have now shared 57 years of marriage. After Ollie attended Dartmouth and Ellie studied Wellesley, near Boston, the two returned to the Met Area, raised a family and began devoting their spare time to golf. They soon became members at Metropolis CC in White Plains, NY, where Ellie's family already were members.

Ellie began her service in golf with the Women's Metropolitan Golf Association in the late '60s. Among the various positions Ellie assumed, she was chair of the Tournament Committee and WMGA president in 1977. She also served as president of the Women's Tri-County Golf Association and remains active in both organizations today.

In a similar fashion, Ollie joined the MGA Tournament Committee in 1972. He has also served as a Board member and tournament official for the Westchester Golf Association. He, too, remains active with both organizations today, and most recently served as president of the

Westchester Seniors Golf Association.

Metropolis remains home to the Lazares, where both have taken on various duties over the years, including members of the Green, Tournament, and Golf Committees. In fact, Ellie was the first woman to serve on the club's Board and Admissions Committee. She was tutored by Paul Runyan, the legendary former head professional at Metropolis, and went on to capture two women's club championships. Ollie, meanwhile, was club president from 1977-78.

The couple perhaps made its greatest impact with the Westchester Golf Association's Caddie Scholarship Fund, which has seen remarkable growth thanks in part to the Lazare's work. They both currently serve on the Board of Directors—Ellie serves as the assistant secretary—and both admit their greatest thrill is seeing young men and women given the opportunity to pursue a college education.

After hearing they would be receiving the Distinguished Service Award, both responded humbly, saying: "It's hard to believe we would be awarded for doing something we love so much. Being around golf and the young caddies has enriched our lives. We certainly get back more than we give and are honored to be recognized in the company of so many great past recipients."

R.J. Cerame is the MGA Communications Manager.