

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

Ann Beard, one of the most dynamic administrators in the game, is the recipient of the MGA's Distinguished Service Award for 1991

Ann Beard literally grew up putting time and effort into golf. Her father, Ken Rutherford, was head pro at three different clubs in Pennsylvania and, as a young girl, Beard often would help him run tournaments and clinics.

Today Beard does much the same, only on a somewhat greater scale. As chairman of the United States Golf Association's Women's Committee, she is in charge of the organization and operation of six USGA national championships. And, as she has done since the mid-1960s, she remains active in local women's and junior golf circles.

It is for such spirited dedication to the game that the Metropolitan Golf Association has awarded Beard its Distinguished Service Award for 1991 (for a full roster of past recipients, see page 62).

Beard came to the Met Area from her native Pennsylvania in 1962 when she married her husband Lee. The pair soon settled in Essex Fells, NJ, where they still live, and Beard joined the Women's Metropolitan Golf Association, the Garden State Women's Golf Association and the New Jersey State Women's Golf Association. She first helped run Met Area tournaments in 1966, when she was appointed to the WMGA Board of Directors. Since then Beard has served as President of the

GSWGA and as Tournament Director, and on the Board of the WMGA for five years, before serving as President in 1979 and '80.

Beard is an accomplished golfer, thanks in no small part to her father and grandfather both being professionals as well as golf coach at Penn State University. She was the first woman to play intercollegiate athletics at Penn State, and was a medalist and semi-finalist in the 1957 NCAA Championships.

Beard has played in nine USGA Championships, including five U.S. Women's Opens. On the club level, she has won the Essex Fells Country Club's women's championship 17 times, including 10 times in a row.

In spite of such success, it is the unwavering spirit for administering the game that has earned Beard the highest praise. "Ann embodies the Distinguished Service Award," says USGA Executive Director David Fay. "She is distinguished and she has served the game magnificently. And although Ann's always been active in women's golf, she's also worked very hard in junior golf and is one of the game's most talented rules officials."

"She also has a talent for setting up golf courses," Fay continues, "and that comes in part from her ability as a player. She has a great feel for the length a women's championship course should be set at and where the holes should be positioned. She sets up honest golf courses."

When Beard heard the Distinguished Service Award was to be bestowed upon her, she was thrilled. "It took me by surprise," she says. "You don't work for something like this, so it's something I'd never really thought about. But when Jim Cotter [MGA President] called to tell me that I'd be receiving the award, it was just such a wonderful feeling. It was exhilarating."

"You know," Beard concludes, "the Met Area has had so many great people who have worked in golf, people like P.J. Boatwright, Joe Dey, and Ike Grainger. I'm absolutely thrilled to be added to a list like that." ■



Ann Beard with USGA Executive Director David Fay.