

The TONY AWARD

The MGA's annual Distinguished Service Award goes to Tony Wimpfheimer, who has worked tirelessly for the betterment of golf

by Chuck Stogel
Contributing Editor

There are many distinguishing characteristics and experiences that have gone into the make-up of C.A. "Tony" Wimpfheimer, recipient of the Met Golf Association's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award.

Two of the most notable were related by Dave Anderson, columnist for *The New York Times*, who made the DSA presentation at the MGA's 99th annual meeting at Westchester Country Club in Rye, NY, in December. Neither tale may have counted heavily in determining who should receive the award, but both are true stories and worthy of retelling. Coincidentally, both involve golfer Tom Watson.

The first anecdote takes us to the 1980 British Open, won by Watson at Muirfield. The winner and his wife Linda flew back to the U.S. with their friends Tony and Ann Wimpfheimer. Approaching home, Watson said he would carry the magnum of champagne that goes to the Open champion off the plane. That left Wimpfheimer carrying the claret jug, thereby achieving the distinction of being one of only two American amateur golfers—the other being Bobby Jones—to return to U.S. soil carrying the British Open trophy.

"Timing is everything," Wimpfheimer smiles.

A native of New York City and a graduate of Williams College, Wimpf-

heimer is a former vice president of Random House who has volunteered immeasurable time and energy serving on numerous MGA and USGA committees, working behind the scenes and out in the field at various championships. His knowledge of the publishing business also has helped the MGA's official magazine, *The Met Golfer*, grow from a fledgling product in 1983 to what it is

for area caddie scholarship funds and the MGA Foundation.

An active member of the MGA Tournament Committee since 1984, Wimpfheimer served on the MGA Executive Committee for nine years and was a founding member on the MGA Foundation's Board of Directors. He is also on the MGA Centennial Committee.

"Being honored by my local association is so meaningful because it's a peer group. They really know you," says Wimpfheimer, who joins an impressive list of past DSA winners, including Ike Grainger, P.J. Boatwright, Joe Dey, Fred Corcoran and Willie Turnesa. "There are so many deserving people, and I'm flattered to be included in the company of past recipients."

Wimpfheimer labels *The Met Golfer* among his proudest accomplishments. "It is clearly the best regional golf magazine in the U.S.," he boasts. "It has been exciting and rewarding. All in all, through golf, I've been privileged to see some of the most beautiful courses and meet some of the best people in the world."

And the second anecdote? It seems that Wimpfheimer and Watson were playing a round at the latter's home course in Kansas City, with Tony paring the first hole and Tom making bogey. By the end of the round, of course, Watson had the lower score, but for the briefest moment, our latest DSA winner could say he was beating the great Tom Watson straight up, no strokes, head-to-head. "I shoulda quit after the first hole," Wimpfheimer laughs. ■



Wimpfheimer (left) works an MGA championship with MGA Tournament Director Gene Westmoreland.

today considered—the nation's top regional golf publication. Wimpfheimer remains chairman of the magazine's Editorial Board.

As president, and now awards dinner chairman, of the Met Golf Writers Association, Wimpfheimer helped reestablish that group's National Awards Dinner as a premier golf event that over the years has raised more than \$250,000