

PHOTO BY BARRY STAVER

PILASTERS, ARTIFACTS AND A CHRONOLOGY HELP NARRATE MORE THAN 135 YEARS OF COLORADO GOLF HISTORY ALONG ONE OF THE HALL'S CORRIDORS.

CIRCA 1887

Promoter Henry Wolcott introduces golf to Denver in an exhibition at Overland Race Track, home of the newly formed Overland Park Club. A course traversing the track takes shape over the ensuing years.

A SHRINE TO COLORADO GOLF

The dazzling new Colorado Golf Hall of Fame Museum at The Broadmoor honors the game's history—and those who made it.

By Jon Rizzi

On April 14, some 200 golf aficionados braved rain and snow to attend the grand opening of the stunning new Colorado Golf Hall of Fame Museum at The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs.

It's safe to say that every one of them was thrilled that they did.

Among them were some two dozen of the 148 inductees that the Hall of Fame has welcomed since its inaugural year of 1973—some of whom were brought to tears upon seeing their treasures displayed so elegantly—as well as descendants and friends of the many legends who had passed on. They mixed and celebrated with members of the 36-person Colorado Golf Hall of Fame board, key staff of The Broadmoor and the recipients of the Hall's annual Persons of the Year and Future Famer awards—who would forever associate their crystal trophies with this monumental event.

The displays wowed the benefactors who donated more than \$1.7 million to produce this shrine to those who shaped Colorado's rich golf history. And there were those who crafted the shrine—the designers, display artists, researchers, archivists, writers, sketch artists, contractors, suppliers, vendors and workers—who not only met The Broadmoor's high standards but exceeded them.

"What an amazing display and fantastic way to show off the rich history of Colorado golf!" Jill McGill, a 2009 Colorado Golf Hall of Fame induct-

ee and a 2023 Person of the Year for winning the 2022 U.S. Senior Women's Open, said.

Standing on the dramatic lobby staircase beneath what she called a "ginormous" photo of herself holding the trophy from the championship, she added, "Truly, it will remain unmatched."

Clearly, the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame has come a long way since its first induction dinner at the Applewood Inn in Golden on September 8, 1973. Babe Lind, Dave Hill and the late Babe Zaharias comprised the inaugural class, and their likenesses—and those of the scores of inductees who joined them over the course of the next 30 years—hung in an area of the Colorado Golf Association headquarters affectionately known as the "Hall of Frames."

By 2005, Colorado Golf Hall of Fame's portraits and modest memorabilia collection had found a home in the new clubhouse at the Riverdale Golf Courses in Brighton. The Hall enjoyed a great 16-year run there, but as 2020 began, it was about to outgrow the space.

With the Hall's 50th birthday coming up in just a few years, its board of directors was more concerned with where to hold its Golden Anniversary golf tournament and celebration than with relocating the museum. The directors suggested The Broadmoor—the Colorado Springs resort that had hosted the 2015 Century of Golf Gala and the 2019 Hale Irwin Medal Dinner—about hosting the golf and the gala in 2023.

Then things got "interesting."

Hall of Fame Vice President Mark Passey headed up the events committee. He contacted Broadmoor President and CEO Jack Damioli, who graciously agreed to his five-star resort hosting both 2023 events.

Sensing momentum, Passey floated the possibility of The Broadmoor becoming the permanent home of the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame.

"That's really an interesting idea," Damioli said after a long pause. "Let's have another conversation about this."

The Broadmoor's longtime PGA Director of Golf Russ Miller followed up with Passey. Meetings and agreements ensued. Decisions over where to put it (the three-story golf club lobby and adjoining east-west corridor), who would pay for its construction (the Hall of Fame would raise the capital, with The Broadmoor providing a free 50-year lease) and when it would be complete (the spring of 2023) happened quicker than Jon Rahm's backswing and has produced equally remarkable results.

"It so far exceeded my expectations," 2013 inductee Tom Woodard said at the grand opening. "This isn't just a state golf Hall of Fame, it's the history of Colorado golf, and to have it at The Broadmoor makes it truly spectacular."

Or as Colorado and World Golf Hall of Fame inductee Hale Irwin summarized at an earlier event at The Broadmoor: "The Colorado Golf Hall of Fame belongs here."