



CLARENCE KING

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Clarence King probably did more for amateur golf—especially on the youth level—than any person in the entire Roanoke area.

Maybe it was because he had four children—all of them golfers—himself, but Clarence took great interest in the youth of the Roanoke Community.

Actually, he got a late start in the sport and it wasn't until he was 28 that he actually began playing. Before that, the Roanoke native was active in other sports and was a painter. However, after service in the Navy during World War II, he took up golf.

He wasn't an immediate success and his first try in Virginia State Open at Boonsboro in Lynchburg saw him fire a lofty 95. But he stayed with it and several years later he set the course record at the Ocean View Golf Club.

He lived in the Norfolk area about eight years before returning to Roanoke to operate a service station. He enjoyed great golfing success as an amateur and was always a player to be reckoned with in tournaments. He won the old Fairacre at Hot Springs in 1954 and many other titles in varied tournaments.

It was in 1957 that the present Blue Hills Golf Club was reopened and club officials picked Clarence to become its first professional. It was a position he held until his death in an airplane crash.

He married the former Martha Wingo of Richmond in 1941 and was the father of four children—Betty King Harnsberger of Roanoke; Billy, the present head professional at Blue Hills; Johnny, Billy's assistant; and Brenda Reynolds, wife of John Reynolds, head professional at Clifftondale Golf Club in Clifton Forge. There are 10 grandchildren.

"Clarence King was the type of individual and professional all sports need," said a close friend. "He was a man who took a personal interest in all young people. He was their friend, their teacher and their advisor. We lost an outstanding man when he died."

Everyone—and there were thousands—who knew Clarence King and the work he did in golf agree that he, indeed, deserves the right to be one of the two initial members of the Roanoke Valley Golf Hall of Fame.