



Hall of Fame JOHN PRESTON

Ask John Preston what he thinks of the game of golf and he will tell you "it's a God-send to old folks. It gives them something to do instead of just sitting around. It keeps you active and enthusiastic. I think it is the greatest game in the world."

Ask folks around the Roanoke Valley and especially at Botetourt Country Club what they think of John Preston and they will tell you that Preston, himself, is a God-send to older folks. He has set an example for them — that you are never too old to compete. His

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enthusiasm and rosy outlook on life has been a great inspiration to all who have crossed paths with the 84-year golfer.

It is just because of such interest, enthusiasm and for his accomplishments that has enabled John Preston to be named to the Roanoke Valley Golf Hall of Fame as its seventh member.

Preston has led a most interesting life. He is a native of Botetourt County, where he still lives at Greenfield, his home for the past number of years.

But he has done much traveling in his time. After receiving his education from the old Daleville Academy, Preston went to Louisiana State University where he received an engineering degree. He then began a career as a refinery engineer with Standard Oil of New Jersey.

His work took him to such places as Spain, Argentina, Dutch West Indies and other interesting countries around the world.

Tennis was his first competitive sport but he turned to golf in 1929 and quickly was shooting close to par. One of his two most prized possessions is a mounted golf ball he used for his first hole-in-one in 1929 in Argentina.

The other prize is a clock with golf balls for numerals he received from the Roanoke Valley Golf Association for being golfer-of-the-year in 1975.

Preston later scored holes-in-one in Trinidad and his third one at Ole Monterey in 1965.

He is proud of the fact he managed to shoot his age when he was 79, 80 and 82.

Preston is married to the former Gertrude McConnel of Baton Rouge, La. They have three children, eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren. He recently gave his 207 acre farm to his three children.

Preston said he had no real secret for his active live. But he said he quit smoking years ago, took only sociable drinks at parties, ate three good meals a day, didn't drink coffee, used little sugar and tried to play as much golf as he could.

He stays active around his farm and can still be seen digging post holes, mending fences and mowing fields.

His advice for a long and eventful life:

"Keep active. Don't sit down. Try to do something interesting every day. And play as much golf as you can."

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