



## *Inner City Youth Golfers' Incorporated*

### Press Release

### *“AAGHOF to Celebrate 70th Anniversary of Langston Golf Course”*

**By: Malachi Knowles, Golf Editor, Westside Gazette Newspaper**

Riviera Beach (USA), May 28, 2009: The AAGHOF will host its 2009 awards presentation on June 8, 2009 at the City Museum of Washington, DC at 7:30PM in conjunction with the “70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Langston Golf Course” during the period June 5-9, 2009. Wake Robin Golf Club, Harold L. Ickes (1874-1952) and John Mercer Langston (1829-1897) will be honored.

Golf has been played since the 16th century in Scotland. The 1st 18-hole course in the United States was the Chicago Golf Club, near Wheaton, Ill, 1893. Blacks however were not allowed to play as they desired! Twelve Black women, tired of being “weekend golf widowers” came together at the home of Helen Webb Harris, August 6, 1936 in DC and organized the “Wake Robin Golf Club, Inc.” They were spouses of prestigious men who loved the game of golf. The all-Black group of men called themselves the “Royal Golf Club.” They would “travel far and near” to find a golf course that would “let them on” even though they may have been restricted to a particular day or time of day. Golf courses existed in the Washington area, on public land, but “for whites only.”

As stated by current Wake Robin members, they also wanted to play golf but in the DC. They drafted a petition in 1938 which was sent to then Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes. He was very supportive of their mission and approved the construction of a 9-hole course on an abandoned National Park Service dump site. Thus was born, Langston Golf Course, June 9, 1939, a segregated golf facility, the home course for Royal Golf Club and Wake Robin Golf Club which was named for John Mercer Langston who organized Howard University's Law Department (later the Law School). He was a diplomat, educator, renowned lawyer and politician believed to have been the first Black ever elected to the United States Congress. Langston was expanded into an 18-hole course in 1955 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Two 90 plus year old golfers - Reds Anderson, Dave Stroman stil play every Monday morning. Other notable celebrities, politicians, dignitaries who have played the course include: U.S. Secretary of Interior, Gale Norton; Missouri Congressman Lacy Clay; South Carolina Congressman James Clyburn; Sam Lacy, Afro-American Newspaper; Althea Gibson; Dr. Calvin H. Sinnenette; Thomas A. Hart, Sr., PhD; Selina Johnson; John Roux and PGA Professionals such as Teddy “Rags” Rhodes, Calvin Peete, Gary Player, Jim Thorpe; Jim Dent; Lee Elder and others. In addition, Washington, DC City Council Member's Harry Thomas, Jr., and Marion Barry as well as former Council Member Vincent Orange and former Mayor Anthony Williams all call Langston their home course.

The most important players at Langston however are the thousands of children from all races and economic strata from the neighborhoods surrounding the course who have found a safe haven for pursuing education and learning the life skills lessons from golf that help them forever. For more than 15 years, several junior golf programs have made Langston their home under the direction of AAGHOF 2006 Inductee, Jimmy Garvin and his outstanding team.

The overall celebration will start with a welcome reception and skills challenge on Friday, June 5th and end on Tuesday, June 9th with an “Environmental Green Clean Day” to include planting of trees and memorial markers being placed on the course honoring John Mercer Langston, Harold Ickes and the Wake Robin Golf Club. ALL are invited! For more specific information, please call (202) 365-8475 or log onto <http://www.africanamericangolfershalloffame.com/906799.html>.

#### Cutline for photos:

Photo by Esmeralda H. Knowles: Langston Golf Course Sign & Photo by Sheila Bunn: Jimmy Garvin, Partner, Golf Course Specialists, Inc. presents an invitation to DC Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, District of Columbia at her Capital Hill Office.

