



African American Golfers Hall of Fame

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Press Release
Release

For Immediate

“Dr. Thelma B. Thompson Inducted Into the African American Golfers Hall of Fame”

Princess Anne, MD. (June 14, 2011) – “Golf is an \$80 billion-per-year industry.” Thelma B. Thompson, Ph.D. – “AAGHOF Inaugural University President of the Year” - once said, “In our culture, golf is not only an important recreational activity; it is also where a great deal of business networking occurs.

As the 13th University of Maryland Eastern Shore President, she believed that her students could benefit from understanding both.” Indeed, she is a *cum laude* graduate of Howard University, Washington, DC and holds the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from that institution. At Howard, she was elected to the Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society and received the coveted Terminal Fellowship Award. In addition, Dr. Thompson holds a diploma from Bethlehem College in Jamaica, and a certificate from London University.

She is considered to be an expert in accountability and accreditations, and has demonstrated leadership excellence in her present position. At UMES, Dr. Thompson has led the charge to assess student learning. Over 20 programs have received initial accreditation because of her emphasis on quality. Dr. Thompson lives by the “Golden Rule” and believes in character education that equips people for a life based in universally respected values. She is an optimist, a pragmatist, and an individual who has a deep conviction in the human potential for good.

The PGA Golf Management University Program, created in 1975 at Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Mich., as the first university to gain PGA accreditation and offer the PGM curriculum was brought to her attention. With the support of her staff, Dr. Thompson set her sites on UMES offering the program. The application process began in 2003 to satisfy the State of Maryland and the PGA of America. In January 2008, with great pride, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in the quaint town of Princess Anne became the first historically black college accredited by the PGA of America to offer the PGA Golf Management University Degree Program to its students. The entire “UMES PGM Program” was inducted into the AAGHOF in 2010. Its first class is set to graduate in December 2012.

The “PGM Program” is a 4½-year structured college curriculum for aspiring PGA Professionals. The educational program is accredited by the PGA of America and includes extensive classroom studies, internship experience and player development providing students the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the golf industry. “Adding the PGA Golf Management University Program as part of the curriculum was the vision of UMES President, Dr. Thelma B. Thompson,” said Dr. Ernest P. Boger, Director, UMES Department of Hotel & Restaurant Management who provides its overall supervision because it naturally integrates all of its curriculum requirements with the knowledge base of the PGA Golf Management Program including sixteen months of structured internship experience and a Playing Ability Test (PAT).

“Dr. Thompson understands conducting business and playing golf go together,” said William ‘Billy’ Dillon, PGA, Director of the UMES PGA Golf Management University Program. “She wants all UMES students to have a chance to learn the basics of the game so when they are in the business world they won’t feel intimidated if offered a chance to play in a local charity fundraiser or invited to participate in a company retreat.”

Dr. Thompson joins others such as Legendary Professional Golfer, Robert “Bob” Murphy, Boynton Beach, FL; James “Junior” Walker, Los Angeles, CA; Vernice Turner* & Helen Webb Harris*,

“CELEBRATING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF YESTERDAY WHILE PAVING THE WAY FOR TOMORROW!”



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Founder, Wake-Robin Golf Club, Inc.; U.S. Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Albany, GA; U.S. Congressman Chaka Fattah, Philadelphia, PA & Eddie N. Williams, Washington, DC; Exie Shackelford Ochier, St Augustine, FL; Lorraine M. Harris, The Villages, FL; James E. Simpson, West Palm Beach, FL; Autocrat Golf Club, Inc., New Orleans, LA; Pro-Duffers USA, Inc. & William “Bill” Brooks, Detroit, Michigan into the 2011 class which was inducted during the “7th Annual AAGHOF Celebration” held at the Palm Beach Gardens Marriott, Palm Beach Gardens, FL during the period May 26-30, 2011. Scott Walker, Golf Channel Anchor, served as the Master of Ceremony. Humanitarian award recipients, Barbara & Jack W. Nicklaus from 2008 also honored the attendees with a very special message that included ICYG’s signature initiative: “Say NO To Drugs – Say YES To Education, Culture & Golf.”

Coincidentally, AAGHOF Founder, Malachi Knowles (1963 graduate of Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD) who started Morgan’s golf team in 1960 established the “AAGHOF Collegiate & Youth Golfers Hall of Fame” in 2010. It is Chaired by James Garvin, Jr., President, Golf Course Specialist, Washington, DC with Co-chairs: Stanley Wilson, Jr., Assistant Golf Professional, Bear Lakes Country Club/Youth Golf Advisor, ICYG and Dr. Boger. “We strongly believe in our youth” said Founder Knowles. He further stated that “golf’s future cannot be passed from its ‘Legends’ to our ‘Youth’ unless they are included in everything that we do and honored annually during this event.” Its inaugural awardees were inducted along with Dr. Thompson with as “*Youth Golfers of the Year.*” Awards were earned and therefore given to: Evette F. Booker, Detroit, Michigan; Norris Brown, Salisbury, MD; Somalia Eva Jones, Cincinnati, Ohio; Imani Kai Poindexter, Washington, DC; Amari Riley, Chula Vista, CA; & Adrian Stewart, Bowie, MD.

Avis Brown Riley, Chair, AAGHOF National Advisory Board & Vice President, San Diego Inner City Golf Foundation congratulated the entire 2011 class. She also stated that “Dr. Thompson will be a strong advocate and role model for the education of our youth.” “Our children – Our Future!”

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Inner City Youth Golfers’, Inc., a 501, c, 3 organization, established the AAGHOF annual celebration in 2005 in order to give African-American Legends of Golf an opportunity to be recognized for their contributions to the sport, to continue being role models to our youth, to network with their peers, to interact and share their own stories about golf “then and now.” The ultimate purpose of the AAGHOF is to honor the legacy and achievements of African Americans in the game of golf and build a permanent place for the world to see their collective contributions.

\*Posthumously

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