

Chick Evans

Charles Evans, Jr. was born in Indianapolis on July 18, 1890. His family moved to Chicago's North side when he was three. Nearby was the former Edgewater Golf Club, which became an irresistible attraction for Chick. At the age of eight, he was introduced to golf as a caddie.

This contract launched him into eight decades of association with golf-as a boy prodigy, a national star, a golf official, and finally as the greatest humanitarian and benefactor the game has known. Along the way, he won every title available to him in his era; he was awarded every honor a golfer can receive, and he was voted into every hall of fame in golf. He even had the opportunity to golf with six presidents of the United States. Chick was awarded honorary degrees from several universities, and in September of 1995, he was posthumously inducted into the Northwestern University Athletic Hall of Fame.

Chick won all four major championships of his day-the Western Open in 1910, the U.S. Open in 1916, the U.S. Amateur in 1916 and again in 1920, and the Western Amateur eight times between 1909 and 1923.

His two-under-par 286 score in winning the 1916 U.S. Open at Minikahda Club in Minneapolis marked the first time ever that par was broken for 72 holes in the event, and the record stood for the next 20 years. And all this time, Chick used only seven hickory-shafted clubs!

When he also won the U.S. Amateur later in 1916, he became the first ever to hold those two USGA titles the same year, a feat since matched only by Bobby Jones. Until Scott Verplank's victory in 1985, Chick was the only amateur to win the Western Open.

Chick took special personal pride in his durability as a contestant. He was winning senior tournaments in the late 1960s, some sixty years after his initial titles. He competed in a record 50 successive U.S. Amateur championships. He won four Chicago City Amateurs-his first in 1907 and his fourth in 1944, thirty-seven years later.

For many years, Chick reigned at the Western Open, his annual get-together with Chicagoland golf fans. His final appearance as a player was in 1967, but in the following years, he toured the fairway ropes in a cart, stopping repeatedly to shake hands and chat with his many admirers. In his last appearance at a Western Open in 1978, Chick and champion Andy Bean had a private conversation about what type clubs Chick (then 88) should be swinging.

Overshadowing both his greatness and durability as a player was Chick's unique contribution to golf: creation of the caddie-scholarship concept.

Chick was firm about never turning professional. There were many offers, especially when he held both the 1916 U.S. Open and U.S. Amateur crown for three years due to the postponement of those tournaments during World War I, "Within minutes after I won the National Open, I had several lucrative offers," he recalled. "My mother and I talked it over, and we decided that I would remain an amateur-forever."

There was, however, a trickle of income from golf which he could not accept and still remain an amateur. As the 1916 U.S. Open champion, Chick made a series of phonograph records on golf instruction for the Brunswick Record Company in an effort to get the masses interested in the game. Chick was owed some \$5,000 in royalties for those recordings, but wanting to retain his amateur status, he refused to accept the money for himself. He directed that the income go into an escrow account. Other endorsement income soon boosted the fund.

The idea for what to do with the money came from his mother, Lena. Although college had beckoned Chick, he dropped out of Northwestern University after a year. The Evans family did not have the financial resources for college, and athletic scholarships had not yet been introduced. Chick's mother suggested he use the money to help those who could not afford college to get there. "My mother wouldn't think of accepting any money unless we could arrange it to be trusted to furnish educations for deserving qualified caddies," Chick related. "She pointed out that the money came from golf and thus should go back into golf. It was all her dream, her idea."

That idea became his dream. However, not until ten years later did it begin to materialize. It was 1929 when Chick convinced the Western Golf Association to take over the fund and use it for college scholarships for deserving and needy caddies-in other words, for young men and women like himself 20 years earlier.



Charles "Chick"
Evans, Jr.
(1890 - 1979)

Scholarship

The primary obligation an Evans Scholar is academic success. In order for the academic experience to be most meaningful, Evans Scholars must exert themselves to achieve the greatest possible level of academic success. Academic excellence has been a long-standing tradition in the Evans Scholars Program, and it falls upon each individual Evans Scholar to contribute his/her efforts to upholding that tradition. (Information from www.marquette.edu.)