

Golf pioneer Moulison Greenhalge reflects on Hall call from Fenwick

- By Jean DePlacido Correspondent
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Everybody in Elaine Moulison's family played golf, so it was only natural she would pick up the clubs at a young age. Right away 12 years old she found she had a knack for it, although when she went to Bishop Fenwick (Class of 1963) there was only an all boys golf team.

That didn't stop Moulison, who grew up in Salem and later married John Greenhalge of Beverly. Not surprisingly, they met on the golf course.

This fall the 1963 graduate will be one of seven individuals along with the 2004 state champion baseball team to be inducted into the Bishop Fenwick Athletic Hall of Fame at Montvale Plaza in Stoneham on November 24.

She tried out for the golf team and when she made it coach Bob Clancy had to get permission from the North Shore Schoolboys Committee for her to play. She admits the boys on the team weren't overjoyed to have her, the only girl in the state on a high school golf team at the time, but the more she won the better they felt about it.

Moulison Greenhalge won every match but one in her high school career. "My only loss was to a boy I thought was absolutely adorable," she said. "I figured he would never ask me out if I beat him, and we didn't need the point to win. Before every match our captain would make out the lineup, and one time he put me in first place. I had to go up against a boy they all thought would be very tough to beat.

"I wound up winning, and afterward they told me the best chance we had was for him to get rattled going against a girl, and if he got down I might be able to get the point. That's just what happened. At the time I thought they were just making me the sacrificial lamb."

She was truly a pioneer in the early years of girls sports, but admits she never gave it a lot of thought at the time. When she was young her family would hop in the car after supper to play nine holes.

"I picked up the swing pretty easily, and wound up playing in the State Junior Championship," she said. "I made it to the finals, but lost on the 10th hole because I had never been in a sand trap before. I remember somebody telling my parents I really should get more training, and I joined the United Shoe Country Club. I played mostly against boys because there just weren't many girls. It made my game better.

When she was a 16-year old senior at Bishop Fenwick, Moulison Greenhalge became the youngest United Shoe Club golf champion in history. While in high school she was runner up in the Women's State Amateur Championship.

Greenhalge won many North Shore and New England tournaments. She got a hole-in-one at the Wenham Golf Club when she was six months pregnant with her second child.

Greenhalge married young and raised three children with her husband. They moved to Ohio, and she decided to go to Ohio State to get her degree. She graduated Summa Cum Laude in psychology and worked with children that develop psychological problems after losing a parent.

Her golf game continued to get better and better. She was club champion at Delaware Golf Club eight years, a two time Franklin County champ, and later club champion at York Country Club in Worthington, Ohio for 16 years.

"By the time I got married and moved to Ohio there were more women involved in the game," said Greenhalge. "The East Coast was wonderful for Juniors and paid all our expenses. I traveled around with the United Shoe interstate and tri-city teams. The top seven girls in the state played (girls) in different states."

Greenhalge won the Franklin County Golf championship in 1973 and again 1984 going against several very competitive Ohio State women golfers.

"We live close to Jack Nicklaus in Franklin County, and there are so many excellent college girls to challenge you. I played until I was 55 when I got rheumatoid arthritis in my wrists and had to give it up.

Getting her family into golf

"I put my kids in a Junior program when they were young, but they all loved baseball," she said. "All of a sudden they started playing golf. I don't think they really thought of it as a sport like baseball or football, but started to realize how exhausting it can be and began to appreciate it more.

"I never had much time to practice as an adult, but I always loved going to the course at night and playing nine holes. You need to establish some kind of identity for yourself beside wife and mother. Of course, once the grandkids came along I had to get out there and teach them how to play."

Greenhalge never expected to get the call about the Fenwick Hall of Fame. From time to time she gets notices from the school, and one was about nominating people for the Hall.

"I threw it away, but my husband fished it out and sent it to my son in Michigan. He wrote to Bishop Fenwick about me, and I'm amazed I will am going to be inducted. It's something I never expected, but I'm really looking forward to it.

"I still have family in Topsfield and in Maine. They all told me they're getting tickets to go. I'm starting to get nervous, but at the same time it's going to be a wonderful night."

