

Gene Hilten—Nominated as Contributor to KHSAA Hall of Fame

Contributing to high school athletics in golf, Gene Hilten was involved with the PGA and a golf teacher since 1962. Gene was a huge advocate of classroom education and good sportsmanship.

Over the course of his lifetime, he always taught enthusiastically anyone who wanted to learn the game of golf – whether that person was a beginner or a state champion contender.

Gene emphasized that hard work would always pay off in golf as well as life. Living in Frankfort, he had an opportunity to work with a wealth of talent, but a countless number of high school golfers from around this state sought him out for lessons and advice.

Numerous high school players have been awarded college golf scholarships and have attributed a lot of their success to Gene's motivation. He not only inspired young people to love and play the game, he was also an effective mentor to other high school golf coaches.

## Gene Hilten

Gene Hilten devoted his life to teaching the game of golf. People of all ages benefited from his special ways of teaching—especially young people. He was a mentor and teacher to hundreds of student-athletes across the state. His professional career began at the Lexington Country Club in 1956—1961; Mt. Sterling Golf and Country Club in 1961 until 1978; Juniper Hills Golf Course in Frankfort in 1978--2004. Hilten taught numerous high school players who achieved success in regional and state championships. Many of his students were all-staters and earned college scholarships. Because of his involvement with Frankfort's High School golf teams, he was named to the Franklin County High School Hall of Fame and the Silver & Gold Society of Western Hills. Hilten shared his knowledge, enthusiasm and love for the game of golf with many high school golf coaches across the state.

Hilten was named Golf Professional of the Year in 1980 by the Kentucky PGA and inducted into the Kentucky Golf Hall of Fame in 1992. He was also named Teacher of the Year in 1986, 1991, and 1992. Other awards include Kentucky PGA Contributions to Educational Development Award in 1986 and 1987. In 2001, he was named in *Golf Digest* as one of America's greatest teachers.

November 27, 2004

**To Whom It May Concern:**

**It is indeed a great honor and privilege to support the nomination of the late Gene Hilen, PGA professional for many years at Juniper Hills Golf Course in Frankfort, Kentucky. I knew Gene from the early 1980's until the time of his recent death. We came to know each other because of his position as a local golf professional and because I was privileged to be coach of girl's golf at Franklin County High School for an extended period of years.**

**Gene Hilen was one of the most generous and caring individuals I have known in the many years I have been involved with this great game of golf. Gene was particularly interested in young people who were just learning to play the game and also those who possessed enough talent to seek further development of their skills. When a young player needed Gene's help, he was nearly always available and, in most cases, provided instruction without charge. Of course, this was conditional on two things: the player had to provide evidence of quality school achievement and was required to practice what they had learned in the golf lesson. He also frequently attended golf matches or tournaments to watch them perform. Young people genuinely loved this man because he was their friend and in no way tried to intimidate them.**

**There are many other ways in which this man was a positive influence in the lives of young people. After they made their mark on high school teams or in tournaments, a great many of them earned scholarships to small colleges or large universities and some even went on to become golf professionals, either at clubs or one of the tours. With all of these accomplishments, Gene did not seek credit for himself. He was truly a generous man.**

**I would encourage the selection committee or anyone associated with the selection process to accept Gene Hilen into the Kentucky High School Hall of Fame. I am sure the young people whose lives he touched are in agreement.**

**Sincerely,**



**Joan Johnston**

**Former Franklin County Girl's Golf Coach  
1965-98**

ENC - 8. 2004

Mike Baskey  
241 Ridge Rd.  
Mt. Sterling, KY 40353

December 6, 2004

Dawahares/KHSAA Hall of Fame  
ATTN: Nominations  
2280 Executive Drive  
Lexington, KY 40505

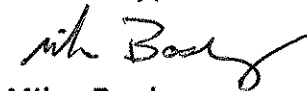
Dear Sir or Madam:

Please find enclosed additional information in support of the nomination of Gene Hilten to the Dawahares/KHSAA Hall of Fame. Enclosures include a letter from Joan Johnston, Girls Golf Coach, Franklin County High School, Frankfort, and photographs of Mr. Hilten.

We ask that you consider additional highlights of Gene's life not previously mentioned. One of the most highly recognized and awarded golf professionals in the state of Kentucky, Gene Hilten has been named Golf Professional of the Year in 1980 and was inducted into the Kentucky Golf Hall of Fame in 1992. He was named Teacher of the Year three times - 1986, 1991, and 1992. He was the Junior Golf Leader in 1990 and 1992. Hilten was also a member of the Franklin County High School Hall of Fame and the Silver and Gold Society of Western Hills High School in Frankfort.

Thank you for your consideration of Gene Hilten to the Dawahares/KHSAA Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,



Mike Baskey