

Grand Golf Tradition Started as a Way to Honor a Grandpa

A popular INDOT golf outing that raises money for transportation workers might never have launched if not for “Grandpa Campbell.”



Lyle Sadler (from left), Todd Clift, Mike Jenkins and Steve Penturf strike serious (top photo) and playful (bottom photo) poses. They are instrumental to the history of INDOT's annual golf outing and have played as a foursome there.



The Indiana State Transportation Workers Foundation (ISTWF) Golf Outing, formerly known as the Commissioner's Open, takes place every summer. Last year, it raised more than \$8,500. This year's event, originally set for July 30, was rescheduled for Oct. 15 because of inclement weather.

What has become a 19-year tradition has its roots in a man who didn't play golf. Real Estate Division Acquisitions Manager Todd Clift can explain.

“My grandpa, Cecil Campbell, who is my mom's father, died in 1995,” said Clift. “At his funeral in Centerville, Ohio, relatives from different states remarked how we don't see each other enough. Grandpa Campbell didn't golf, but all my aunts and uncles did. As a way to recognize Grandpa and to get together, we came up with the Campbell Scramble, a best-ball type of golf outing.”

The Campbell Scramble, followed by a family picnic, started in 1996 and has not stopped. It takes place annually and now includes several family members who weren't yet born in 1996.

The inaugural Campbell Scramble went so well that Clift thought it might apply to INDOT, as well. Clift had started working here in 1994, when the Real Estate Division was called the Land Acquisition Division. At the time, the staffs of three of the departments within the division — appraising, buying, and relocation — were disjointed with little communication and interaction between the departments.

“I was in relocation and decided to tell the other Land Acquisition (LA) departments about the Campbell Scramble and suggested that our division try it as a team-building exercise,” said Clift. “I thought it would be a great way for

employees to get to know one another better.”

Steve Penturf and Lyle Sadler, who worked in the LA Division, helped Clift organize the inaugural LA Outing on a weekend in 1996 at Sahn Golf Course in Indianapolis. It was a scramble format, which took the edge off because all players tee off, and teams choose which shot is the best and play the

next shot from that position. Play continues in this fashion for all 18 holes. This allows players of all skill levels to participate.

Word spread quickly of the funny stories, crazy hits, great shots and outright fun of the LA Outing. Soon, the non-golfers in the division wanted to play. The demand called for two LA Outings a year.

Those outside the LA Division caught wind of the tales being told about the LA Outing. Now-former employees Mark Newland, Joyce Newland and Calvin Lee asked to join the fray, as did still-current employee Mike Jenkins. Cliff gladly accepted their presence.

“Eventually, consultants heard about the LA Outings, so they also were invited,” said Cliff. “We had four to eight foursomes, and we tried to balance the teams with different skill levels. We gave out trophies for the winning team, longest putt, longest drive, and closest to the pin.”

LA Outings took place through 1999, but in 2000, Jenkins, Sadler and Lee had the idea of expanding the event.

“We thought that momentum had built enough for it to be offered agency-wide,” said Jenkins, currently INDOT’s Management Information Systems highway applications manager. “We pitched the proposal to then-Commissioner Chris Klika, and she made it the Commissioner’s Open.”

The inaugural Commissioner’s Open took place in 2000 at Riverside Golf Course in Indianapolis. Klika had a boot on her injured foot at the time and couldn’t participate, but she was driven around the course to greet the golfers.

“All seven commissioners since Chris Klika have come out annually to play or at the very least support it,” said Cliff. “One of them, Karl Browning, said, ‘If this were bowling, I’m your guy.’ Karl wasn’t a golfer, so he didn’t play, but he came to support it.”

The Commissioner’s Open venue changed to Sarah Shank Golf Course in Indianapolis and enjoyed popularity. After several years, organizers were questioned whether, from an ethics point of view, INDOT consultants should be allowed to participate.

“That’s when I had the idea to tie the entire outing in with the ISTWF charitable institution,” said Jenkins. “It was still called the Commissioner’s Open, but then we officially changed the name to the ISTWF Golf Outing in 2014.”

Jenkins continued: “The tournament is a great way to raise money for the foundation, which was founded in 2006 to assist the families of INDOT workers who are killed or disabled while working. The



A first-place trophy from 2003 and second-place trophy from 2004 are among the mementoes that INDOT’s Todd Clift has kept over the years.

foundation has grown to include [hardship and scholarship programs](#). I thank the former INDOT commissioners and deputy commissioners who founded the organization.”

The outing now takes place at Fort Benjamin Harrison’s Fort Golf Course in Indianapolis and has grown so much that participants have the entire course to themselves. Besides INDOT employees and consultants, those from the Federal Highway Administration and the ISTWF board participate. The 2018 outing will feature 30 foursomes and at least one sponsor per hole.

“It’s humbling to think that this started as a team-building exercise for our division, but, even before that, it was rooted in my family’s way of honoring Grandpa Campbell,” said Clift.



*Among those participating in an LA Outing in the late 1990s are (front row, from left, with current employees’ names boldfaced) Barb Moore, Mickey Rogers, Alan Curson, Teresa Penturf, Bev Stout, **Mike Jenkins**, Calvin Lee, Kenny Stiles, John Adams, **Angie Hawley** and Tom Laycock, and (back row, from left, with current employees’ names boldfaced) Phil Anderson, **Steve Penturf**, **Todd Clift**, Rich Lewis, Bob Souchon, **Michael Cales** and **Lyle Sadler**.*