

Jack Champagne
Dallas, Texas
2002 Inductee, Executive Category
January 31, 1933 – June 24, 2006

Born: January 31, 1933

Birthplace: Buffalo, New York

Residence: Dallas, Texas

Education: Lindsey-Hopkins Business School, Miami, Florida

Occupation: Retired owner/manager/journalist, Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America, Inc.

Joined PPA: 1959 (charter member)

Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America/PPA Accomplishments: 2002 Hall of Fame, Executive Category; Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America Co-Manager of the Year, Killen, Texas, 1991; Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America Distinguished Service Award, 1989; \$100,000 Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America Club, 1987; PPA Journalism Excellence Award, 1964.

Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America/PPA Career: Manager, Putt-Putt Golf and Games, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1997; Manager, Putt-Putt Golf & Games, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1996; Manager, Putt-Putt Golf & Games, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1994-1995; Manager, Putt-Putt Golf & Games, Killeen, Texas, 1984-1992; Owner/Manager, Putt-Putt Golf Course, Lawton, Oklahoma, 1979-1983; Manager, Putt-Putt Golf Course, Toledo, Ohio, 1977-1978; Manager, Putt-Putt Golf Course, Syracuse, New York, 1971-1976; Manager, Putt-Putt Golf Course, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 1970; Manager, Putt-Putt Golf Course, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1967; Art Director, Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America, 1962-1966; Editor, "Rub of the Green," 1962-1966; Editor, Putt-Putt World, 1962-1966; Columnist, Putt-Putt World, 1963-1968; PPA Public Relations Director, 1968, 1966, 1965; Manager, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1960-1961; Manager, Putt-Putt Golf Course, Houston, Texas, 1959-1960.

Jack Champagne was a "Jack of all Trades" in a 37-year career with Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America – from franchise owner to franchise manager to editor of Putt-Putt World magazine to Professional Putters Association national tournament director.

He did it all.

"Being the PPA National Tournament Director was the most satisfying position I held with Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America," says Jack Champagne, who served in that role in 1968, 1966, and 1965. "Wanda, my wife, served as the PPA registrar, overseeing all PPA and amateur records. She was my assistant and traveled with me to all PPA National Tournaments from Youngstown, Ohio to Louisville, Kentucky to Colorado Springs, Colorado." Jack Champagne replaced Dale Brady, the PPA's first national tournament director.

When it came to Putt-Putt Golf Courses and PPA, Jack Champagne did more than any man who served the franchise system that was founded in 1954 by Don Clayton, a Fayetteville, North Carolina businessman.

“In 1957 I went job-hunting and answered a newspaper ad, ‘Looking for managers. Miniature golf company opening two new operations,’” Jack Champagne remembers. “I was hired! The man in charge who hired me was Bill Kitchens. And, as the saying goes . . . the rest is history.”

He began working for the Putt-Putt Golf Course franchise in Houston, Texas. He later moved on as manager of the Putt-Putt Golf Course in New Orleans, Louisiana, before joining the franchise system’s corporate office in Fayetteville, North Carolina. There, he became the Boswell for Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America and the Professional Putters Association. He is remembered fondly for “Par-Don My Par,” a collection of substance and humor about the business, the sport, and life. He left the PPA behind in 1967 to become the first manager of a 72-hole operation, working for Jocko Diveley in Indianapolis, Indiana. It would be one of many stops that would see Jack Champagne manage installations in Virginia, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, and Kalamazoo, Michigan, his final stop before retiring in 1997.

“Wanda and I spent a lifetime in the business, but the day came when it was time to hang up our putters,” he says. “Thirty-seven years is a long time, but there was never a dull moment. There were many ups and downs, but as Frank Sinatra sang, I did it my way . . . with honor and integrity.” Jack Champagne, with his generous and kindly ways and his good humor, made a lifetime of friends with Putt-Putt Golf Courses of America and the Professional Putters Association, the organization that became dear to his heart as its National Tournament Director and Editor-in-Chief.

“I am absolutely humbled by this recognition,” said Jack Champagne, who became the 33rd member of the PPA Hall of Fame, inducted by PPA Commissioner Joe Aboid on August 8, 2002, in ceremonies at the Partridge Inn during the 43rd PPA National Championship banquet in Augusta, Georgia.