



ANCC FOUNDATION Did You Know?



Joe Jordan

Have you encountered the boulder mounted plaque (pictured below) near the Arlington driving range and wondered who was Joe Jordan? The following attempts to answer that question.



Joseph Charles “Joe” Jordan was employed by the Club from 1929, shortly after the Club’s original nine-hole golf course opened and continued to serve until his death in July 1977. During his tenure he served as both the starter and the caddie master. For many years a plaque with a bas relief of his likeness hung outside the entrance to the golf pro shop at Arlington, inscribed with the words “No Use to Grumble.” When the golf pro shop was scheduled for demolition, the plaque was mounted on a boulder and moved to the vicinity of the driving range.

In recognition of Joe's incredible service, in 1969 the Club began celebrating an annual "Joe Jordan Day" that raised funds to supplement his income. Joe Jordan's forty years of service to ANCC was also recognized at this time by *Washington Post* columnist Maury Fitzgerald's July 6, 1969, article titled "Jordon Picked the Right Club".¹

Jordon Picked Right Club: 40 Years' Service at Army Navy
 Washington Post Staff Writer By Maury Fitzgerald
The Washington Post, Times Herald (1959-1973): Jul 6, 1969;
 ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post
 pg. 50

40 Years' Service at Army Navy

Jordon Picked Right Club

By Maury Fitzgerald

Washington Post Staff Writer

BACK IN 1929 a little boy walked into the golf shop at Army Navy Country Club and asked for a caddy's job. Today, 40 years and 175 pounds later, Joe Jordon is an institution at the Virginia service club.

Jordon, who used to tote regularly for the late Sam Rayburn and Justice Hugo Black, is custodian of the first tee and his word is law.

Admirals and generals come to Jordon for caddies and starting times and the service they receive is the same Jordon gives all the other members. In fact, most of the high-ranking officers at the club grew up with Jordon.

JORDON WATCHED Ralph Bogart grow from a 165 shooter for nine holes to one of the finest amateur golfers this section ever produced.

The jovial Jordon laughed when he recalled Bogart's first venture on the course. The son of a Navy captain, Bogart began playing at 8 and won the service club championship when only 14.

Another important golfer Jordon watched develop was Gen. Omar Bradley. "He liked to play but he never let it interfere with his career," Jordon said of the five-star general.

JORDON ORGANIZED the Arlington Divot Club with 20 members in 1954. The club now has more than 200 members and plays tournaments regularly at public golf courses.

Jordon developed Negro players and raised money to send them to various championships. He said of Sonny Wilson and Jack Bradley, two of his former caddies, "They were born too soon."

Steve Tobash, present Army Navy profes-

sional, thinks Jordon is the greatest in his business. Tobash said that when nonresident members of the club meet anywhere in the world the first thing they ask is, "How is old Joe?"

ACTUALLY, Jordon isn't old; he is only 54. But Jordon has been around Army Navy so long that everybody considers him ancient.

The only break in his 40 years of service at Army Navy came when he spent four years and two months in the Army. He was stationed in France, England and the Philippines. "When time came for my discharge," he said, "I couldn't wait to get back to Army Navy."

As the oldest starter and caddymaster in point of service in this area, Jordon has outlasted seven club managers and four professionals. He went to work for Frank Harlig, Army Navy's first professional, in 1931.

JORDON IN turn worked for pros Lionel Walker and J. Monroe Hunter before becoming the official starter and caddymaster. When Allen Burton came as pro 31 years ago, Jordon was elevated to his present position.

When Tobash moved into the shop, Jordon was there to greet him. Now Jordon has his own office but, as he jokingly tells it, "They had to burn down the shop before they let me back in."

When plans were drawn for rebuilding the shop, burned out a little over two years ago, an office for Jordon was included. His office has a huge desk and a telephone but there the resemblance to a normal office ends.

Crammed into the cubicle are candy, cookie and Coke machines. Asked about the machines, Jordon said, "Even caddies have to eat."

Illness and Death

On June 30, 1977, Colonel Sims, the General Manager, reported that Joe had suffered a stroke and may not be able to return to work for an extended period. Colonel Sims reported that he was "studying means of keeping him on a 'Dean Emeritus' basis at no reduction in his take-home pay from all sources." Unfortunately, Joe never recovered and passed away the following month.



¹ Fitzgerald misspelled Joe's name with two "o"s. The proper spelling is Jordan.

In Memoriam

On August 3, 1977, the G&G Committee formed a subcommittee to plan a memorial to Joe Jordan. At the Executive Committee meeting on August 15, 1977:

“...the General Manager briefed as to the plans for a “Joe Jordan Day.” After due consideration, the Committee resolved that since the primary purpose of the “Day” was to accumulate funds for Mr. Jordan’s widow, the Club should bear the cost of the plaque...”

The plaque dedication took place on July 29, 1978, with Mrs. Jordan, local ministers, and other dignitaries participating. Maury Fitzgerald again honored Joe Jordan with his November 13, 1977, column titled “Tourney to Honor Jordan”:²

Tourney to Honor Jordan

By Maury Fitzgerald

The Washington Post (1974-Current file); Nov 13, 1977;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post
pg. 98

Tourney to Honor Jordan

By Maury Fitzgerald

In 1932, Ralph Bogart became the youngest golfer to win Army Navy Country Club's championship, defeating Gen. Omar Bradley in the final round.

Bogart, one of the finest amateurs developed in the Washington area, was a 14-year-old schoolboy. His caddy was Joe Jordan. Actually, Jordan was much more than a caddy to Bogart.

The late Capt. I. C. Bogart (USN) played golf nearly every day at the Arlington course and hired Jordan more as a baby-sitter than caddy for his son. Once beyond the prying eyes of the clubhouse and pro shop, Jordan, who gave Bogart his first golf lessons, would join the game.

Bogart lost his temper on occasion and would toss a club or two into the brush. The patient Jordan would admonish his protege, saying, “Your dad will find out if you don't behave.”

When members came to him with complaints about their golf carts and the foursome ahead playing slowly, Jordan would disarm them with his big grin and say, “No use to grumble.”

Jordan is gone but the Army Navy members are making sure he won't be forgotten. Come April, a bronze plaque will be installed on the first tee honoring a man whose smile and gentle manners endeared him to everyone.

Jordan, who greeted members at the first tee with a “How you all,” worked all his life at Army Navy. He started as a caddy, made caddymaster and 40 years ago was installed as the club's official starter with his private office by the first tee.

Jordan died in July after a long illness and members promptly held a special “Joe Jordan Memorial” tournament that netted the Jordan family \$2,500.

Because of their esteem for Jordan, his memorial tournament has been made a fixture on the club tournament schedule. And, because of the expected large entry, the 1978 event will be played in three sections over four days.

The tournament will be in July with seniors opening the festivities on a Wednesday. The women will compete on Friday and the main event is listed for that weekend.

Jordan was a fine player but there were few golf tournaments for blacks in those days. In later life, Jordan made up for his disappointments by helping others try to make it on the PGA tour.

Asked by a friend why he was always dipping into his jeans for money for fellows, some he hardly knew, he replied: “Most of those kids and their daddies too were caddies right here at Army Navy. What better reason could a man have?”

This Article Derived from the ANCC Centennial History Article Regarding Joe Jordan

² This time Fitzgerald correctly spelled Jordan.