

COMMUNITY LIFE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 1997

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Winter golf honors friends memory

■ This group gathers annually for a unique memorial tribute to a friend.

BY MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER

For the past ten years, apartment dwellers of Farmington Hills Independence Green have been privy to a strange sight on one of the coldest Sundays of winter: a dozen golfers playing a raggedy game of golf on a snow covered course marked by orange construction cones.

What they are witnessing is an ongoing memorial tribute to a friend and brother, an avid winter golfer who lost his life in a 1987 car accident. The tenth annual Bill Brown Memorial Winter Golf Coney Dog Invitational Classic was celebrated Jan. 5 this year against strong winds and intermittent snow showers.

"We made a modified course of seven holes which we marked with pylons," said Len McCulloch, who developed the event to honor his life long friend.

McCulloch's friend Bill Brown was 25 when a young driver barreled through a red light and broadsided his car. The accident happened August 18, 1987, the same night and within a few miles of the crash of Northwest Flight 255. Brown died of massive head injuries. His fiancée, a passenger in his car, suffered a closed head injury but has since recovered.

"For three or four years prior to his death, Bill came golfing with my brother Mark and me in the winter," said McCulloch, a longtime resident of Independence Green and director



STAFF PHOTO BY GILSON LAMINER

REMINISCING: Len McCulloch says his friend Bill Brown was the driving force behind their winter golf games. Here, McCulloch stands in front of a work of art made by closed head injury clients of Broe Rehabilitation in Farmington Hills, where he works as a therapist.

of psychological services at Broe Rehabilitation Services of Farmington Hills.

McCulloch, a psychologist, began specializing in work with closed head injury patients the same year his friend died, but says it was a field he was gravitating toward naturally. Being prodded to play golf in winter, however, was due to Brown's relentless insistence.

"We had no problem getting a tee time," McCulloch joked. "Bill was the driving force behind our winter golf. We would play regardless of the weather, usually every Sunday through the winter at Independence Green. We'd put out the orange pylons to mark the course."

"The December following the accident, I thought we should have a memorial winter golf outing in Bill's

honor with his closest family and friends."

The first outing was held Dec. 28, 1987, fueled by hot chocolate, lots of laughter and reminiscing, and a common bond of love for the man they called brother or friend. A tradition was born.

"It's a day to be together. Over

See GOLF, B2



LEON SCHOICHT

Diamond career was a jewel of a business

My dad was in the jewelry profession ever since coming to America from Europe. He wanted me to become a stone setter of fine jewelry because he said I had golden hands; meaning, skillful or talented fingers.

He proceeded to have me apprentice for his diamond setter, at the fabulous wage of ten dollars per week. It was extremely difficult to learn; you had to possess a very strong grip as the skill was one of dynamic tension of each hand pressing against the other one. Also, the small tools called gravers were carbide steel, razor sharp, and many a day I cut my fingers and hand. Normally it takes five years to learn the trade; but because of my artistic skill, I did it in two. I worked the most difficult jobs. I had the patience and talent to painstakingly carve the platinum and gold we worked on into tiny works of sculpted art.

Dad was actually a wholesaler who sold the finest stones to other jewelers. He had lived through the great depression and his investing in top notch quality diamonds was no accident; his reasoning was that if you had excellent merchandise, if there ever was another market collapse you'd be able to retrieve your cost from your own inventory. This process also helped establish the fact of carrying only the finest quality; it resulted in a highly respectful reputation. This in turn helped build a large and faithful business following. It brought in customers

See DIAMONDS, B2



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