

# Supporting Special Olympics Golf

PGA Past President Tom Addis III brings a career of support to recruiting for The McGladrey Team Championship

By Bob Denney



MONTANA PRITCHARD/THE PGA OF AMERICA

**A**t the heart and soul of The McGladrey Team Championship rests a unique bond between golfers to make teamwork something special on a golf course.

This exercise in bonding is enhanced this year as The McGladrey Team Championship will support Special Olympics with a donation from each participant's registration fee in The PGA of America's grass roots amateur best-ball championship.

Among the PGA Professionals who led the movement for golf to be a Special Olympics sport is PGA Past President Tom Addis III of Beaumont, Calif., the executive director/CEO of the Southern California PGA Section.

On Jan. 28, on the eve of the 56th PGA Merchandise Show, Addis was presented with the 2008 Conrad Rehling Award to celebrate Addis' devotion of more than two decades to the Special Olympics golf movement, and to share his passion about the game's inherent values that affect the athletes and their families.

"The Conrad Rehling Award was so special for many reasons, due to Conrad's devotion to the game of golf and golf for the Special Olympics athlete and the intellectually challenged," says Addis. "Conrad and I were good friends and, at one time, business partners in a golf school and co-instructors in professional teaching seminars. Conrad and his wife, Maxine, were special people, each dedicated to the game of golf, youth and Special Olympics."

A member of the PGA Golf Professional Hall of Fame, Addis served as the 29th president of The PGA of America from 1994-96. He was a key member of an original "task force" of PGA Professionals who attended a 1989 meeting in Washington, D.C., and pitched golf to Eunice and Sargent Shriver. Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded Special Olympics in 1968.

As a result of the work of Addis, Rehling and others, golf was introduced as a demonstration sport in 1995 at the Special Olympics World Games in New Haven, Conn. In 1999, the game of golf was recognized as an official sport of the

Special Olympics Games in Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

Currently, all 50 states participate in the Special Olympics golf program with over 9,400 athletes competing. The program also is offered in more than 50 countries worldwide.

"Golf in the Special Olympics – or for that matter, other activities for the disabled – is very important because of the rehabilitative enhancement the game and activity provides for the participant, their families, friends and supporters," says Addis. "The endearing 'piece' of all Special Olympics activities, including golf, is the unified aspect of the program – the pairing of family, friends or supporters with the athlete to participate together."

This year, Addis joins a nationwide network of ambassadors to recruit PGA Professionals to host a Local Qualifying Event for The McGladrey Team Championship, while also continuing to promote the rewards of Special Olympics involvement.

"We encourage PGA Professionals in all 41 Sections to find a way and means to become involved with the athletes in Special Olympics whether volunteering to do a golf clinic or volunteering for other and any Special Olympics activities," explains Addis.

Special Olympics Golf, part of a worldwide sports program for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, offers five levels of competition for athletes with different ability levels. Ranging from individual skills competition to alternate-shot team play to individual stroke play, Special Olympics golf allows athletes to grow in the game as they gain experience.

To register for a Local Qualifying Event, visit [PGA.com/teamchampionship](http://PGA.com/teamchampionship).

The McGladrey Team Championship is the result of a partnership between The PGA of America and RSM McGladrey, the Official Accounting, Tax and Business Consulting firm of The PGA of America. RSM McGladrey is the fifth largest accounting, tax and business consulting firm in the country when considered with McGladrey & Pullen LLP (a partner-owned CPA firm). ■



**What:** The McGladrey Team Championship

**Where:** Pinehurst (N.C.) Resort

**When:** Oct. 26-28

**Who:** 41 four-member PGA Section Champion teams composed of three amateurs and a PGA Professional

**Web site:** [PGA.com/teamchampionship](http://PGA.com/teamchampionship)

Tom Addis III (left) poses with Special Olympics Global Ambassador Nikki Harrold and Florida Special Olympics President Monty Castevens.