

GHS SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Bob Gettis *Building Memories*



BOB GETTIS in his collector loft with a 1976 Bob Jones Award program that was autographed for him by the award's recipient – Ben Hogan.



BIRD-WATCHING ENTHUSIASTS, Mary and Bob Gettis also like “spotting” golf balls with bird logos or a bird name in the title. This rack shows several from Crow Creek and Ibis golf clubs, to Eagle and Swan golf balls.

Bob Gettis grew up in Philadelphia, Pa. along with his older brother, Mike. A pharmaceutical sales executive, Bob and his wife, Mary, have been married for 42 years. They have a daughter, Jeannine, and a son, Bobby (plus a granddaughter and a grandson on the way). He joined the GCS in 1980 and served as its president from 2010-11. He still serves on the Board and is a long time contributor to The Bulletin. Below he recounts some of his collecting stories. – Editor

I remember my mother’s father, Gramps, showing me coins of the world he had collected during his time in the Army and World War I. Among them were the real thin round ones with square holes. They intrigued me and I still have that can of coins. I shared them with our children and will do the same with our granddaughter because now I’m Gramps!

I would sit on the floor as a kid sorting through household change and rejoice when I could find one to fill in a blank spot in the old coin collecting books with the blue covers. It was a time when you could come across a 1943 steel cent. Do you remember? Along the way there were rocks, butterflies and stamps.

When I was 12 my big brother, Mike, gave me my first set of golf clubs, an Al Geiberger Spalding starter set which began a lifelong love of golf.

When our daughter was still of stroller age I spotted a canvas bag of five wooden shaft clubs at a driveway sale and when Mary, my wife, found information about the Golf Collectors Society in a *Time/Life* book at our local library I contacted Joe Murdoch, our co-founder.

I consider myself a “club guy” but most of my treasures are in other collecting niches. With almost 40 years of golf collecting to reflect on, it’s a challenge to pick the best. But I do have my favorites.

One is the Bob Jones Award program I asked Ben Hogan to sign when he received the award at a USGA meeting in 1976 – 42 years ago! Others include a postcard from Joe Murdoch; a Keystone mid-iron restored by GCS co-founder Bob Kuntz; a concave wedge from Chet Harrington, a friend and Merion member; a sand mold from the late “Mr. Tee” Lee Crist; and a copy of *Golf is My Game* signed by Bobby Jones, which was a gift from my brother.

There is a person and a story associated with each item. I suspect you would share similar stories when asked about items in your collections.

One of the challenges with any collection is creatively

displaying what you have and making the best of the space. We live in what was designed as a vacation home in the Poconos of Pennsylvania. It features a great stairway landing and loft area for all my stuff.

Without the GCS I would never have played the East and West courses at Merion with members Murdoch, Harrington, John Capers III, Greg Seminack and my son, Bobby.

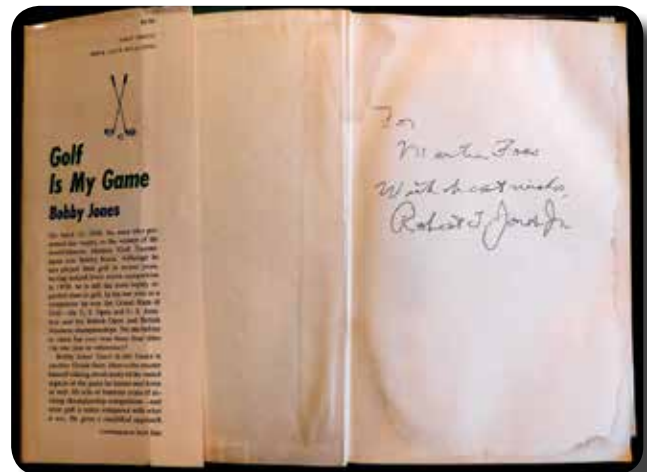
Through these connections I had the priceless opportunity to work with my brother, Mike, at Merion during the U.S. Open in 2013. That memory is a priceless bit of my "collection."

My favorite club hangs just above a window. It has a brass ball at the end and heavy duty spring. That is a "Pro-Swing" swing practice club made popular because Ernest Jones, a well-known teacher of the time, embraced it for his lessons. But what makes this one so special? It was a salesman's sample that one of Mary's friends thought I would like to have – over 30 years ago.

It's that kind of fellowship and these kinds of stories associated with nearly every item we find that makes this Society special. 🏌️



A view of Bob's golf collectibles display.



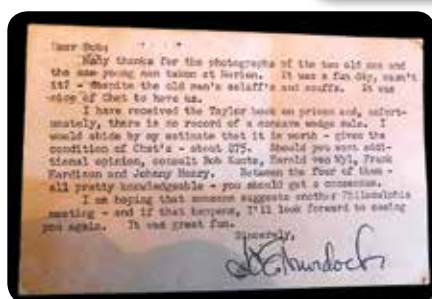
An autographed copy of Bobby Jones' Golf is My Game, a gift from Bob's brother, Mike.



Sand mold from Lee Christ.



Above, a Keystone Reach iron restored by co-founder Bob Kuntz (club at top); a concave wedge from friend Chet Harrington (middle); and a Pro-Swing training device with brass ball that was a salesman's sample. To the left of the clubs is a souvenir from an early Bing Crosby National Pro-Am.



A treasured post card from GCS co-founder Joe Murdoch recounting the special golf round at Merion and suggesting that Harrington's asking price of \$75 for the above wedge was a fair one. The post card and the club are now among Bob's favorites, especially the memories they inspire.