

A trailblazer for women in golf

By Design looks at the legacy of golfing pioneer Marion Hollins and the impact she had on the sport's most famous courses.



ASGCA and ASGCA Foundation are supporting a fundraising initiative to honor Marion Hollins' contributions to the game of golf. The Marion Hollins Memorial Project is planning a landscaped memorial area overlooking her grave at Cemeterio El Encinal in Monterey, California, to mark the final resting place of this remarkable woman.

To find out more about the memorial project and to make a donation, visit www.marionhollins.org.

Tiger Woods will be joined as an inductee into the World Golf Hall of Fame for 2021 (to be held in 2022, due to the pandemic) by former PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem, LPGA Tour great Susie Maxwell Berning and one of U.S. golf's pioneering women: Marion Hollins.

Hollins was an outstanding golfer. She won the U.S. Women's Amateur in 1921, the Pebble Beach Championship seven times and captained the USA team in the inaugural Curtis Cup at Wentworth in 1932. But she was also a trailblazer in golf development. Greg McLaughlin, CEO of the World Golf Foundation, says: "Marion was a principal force of the game and the visionary of some of today's greatest courses."

Her first foray in golf course development came after the decision by Creek Club in Locust Valley, New York, to disallow women golfers. Hollins and a group of women banded together to create the Women's National Golf & Tennis Club in Glen Head, New

York. Hollins was instrumental in the project, helping to secure the land, assemble the finances, recruit members, hiring Devereux Emmet to design the course, and oversee the course construction.

In 1924, a year after the Women's National Golf & Tennis Club opened, Hollins approached developer Samuel Morse with a concept for an elite private club in Pebble Beach, California. Impressed, Morse reserved 150 acres and put Hollins in charge.

That project would become the famed Cypress Point Club. Morse initially selected C.B. Macdonald and Seth Raynor as the architects, but when Raynor died, Hollins hired Dr. Alister MacKenzie to take over. But it was Hollins' eye for design that led to the creation of one of the most famous golf holes in the world. Of the par-three sixteenth hole, which plays 230 yards over the Pacific to a green surrounded by bunkers and fronted by the rocky coastline, MacKenzie would later write, "I was in no way responsible for the hole. It



Marion Hollins in 1928, with (from left) Dr. Alister MacKenzie, H.J. Whigham (the editor of Town and Country), and Robert Hunter Sr., on what would become the eighteenth fairway at Cypress Point

was largely due to the vision of Marion Hollins.”

“This hole was made better by Marion’s vision and intuition, and that was only a fraction of her contribution to golf on the Monterey Peninsula,” says ASGCA President Forrest Richardson. “Besides Samuel Morse himself, the world owes her a great ‘thank you’ for what was accomplished in this special part of the golf world.”

Hollins went on to forge a strong working relationship with MacKenzie, which also saw them collaborate on the design for Pasatiempo Golf Club near Santa Cruz, California, which she funded

with a \$2.5 million windfall from an oil speculation. “Her goal was to build the best course west of the Mississippi,” notes The Alister MacKenzie Society, on its website. “The location of the golf course was on the hills looking south to the Monterey Bay. The rolling hills of sand made an excellent foundation for the course and the elevation changes provided a natural resource for Dr MacKenzie to develop his Santa Cruz masterpiece.”

When Pasatiempo officially opened in September 1929, it was the first planned residential development with a golf course in North America to be conceived and built by a

woman. Over 2,000 people followed Hollins’ fourball, in which she was joined by the great Bobby Jones, U.S. Women’s Amateur Champion Glenna Collett and British Amateur Champion Cyril Tolley. Hollins would continue to invest heavily in Pasatiempo, and the club became a magnet for the rich and famous of the day.

Hollins was also instrumental in the design of another of the world’s most revered layouts. It is thought that Jones’s experiences of playing with Hollins at both Cypress Point and Pasatiempo convinced him to select MacKenzie as the co-designer of Augusta National.



The eighteenth hole at Pasatiempo, one of the California courses where Hollins collaborated with Dr. Alister MacKenzie

While construction was taking place at Augusta, MacKenzie sent Hollins, as his associate, to perform a site inspection. In Geoff Shackelford's book, *'Alister MacKenzie's Cypress Point'*, there is a quote from MacKenzie on Hollins in response to Jones' co-founder Clifford Roberts questioning the decision to send Hollins: "She has been associated with me on three

"It is difficult to understand how incredible Marion Hollins' achievements were given the social and economic eras with their prescribed roles for women, with travel limited to horse power, early roads and automobiles, cross-country train service and ocean-going vessels, and with the limits to communication by newsprint," says

for only a small percentage of total golfers and an even smaller percentage of women were involved in any form of golf related business, the accomplishments of Marion truly stand out," says ASGCA Past President Rick Robbins. "She was definitely ahead of her time."

"She may not have professed to be a 'golf architect', but it is difficult today not to consider her an equal to many of the early pioneers of American golf course design," says Richardson. "She was a driving force in bringing thoughtful golf design to the West Coast."

"Marion Hollins will be remembered as a suffragette, an equestrian, a pioneer woman golfer, an entrepreneur, a golf course architect and golf course developer," says Bel Jan. "Her hand on the land of Pasatiempo, Cypress Point and Augusta National Golf Club are now immortalized." ●

"She was a driving force in bringing thoughtful golf design to the West Coast"

courses and not only are her own ideas valuable, but she is thoroughly conversant in regard to the character of the work I like."

Hollins has since been dubbed "the woman who built Augusta National", by Augusta National historian David Owen.

ASGCA Past President Jan Bel Jan. "Doubtless any woman who knows of Marion Hollins has been inspired by her vision, her determination to make the best of any situation, her ability to make connections and for everyone to be successful."

"In a time when women accounted