

**The United States Blind Golf Association
is proud to recognize and induct
Guiding Eyes for the Blind
into its 2012 class of the Hall of Fame.**



Al Maiolo (L) & Richard Ryan (R)

In June of 2012 Guiding Eyes for the Blind hosted the 35th consecutive Guiding Eyes for the Blind Golf Classic, which features blind golfers from the United States Blind Golf Association. In fact, many members of the organization refer to The Guiding Eyes Classic as the "Masters" of Blind Golf.

The press and outstanding exposure that the USBGA has received from the Classic is second only to the organization's own National championship.

Back in the middle '70's Don Kauth, the founder and then executive director of Guiding Eyes, desperately wanted a PGA tour golf tournament to benefit the guide dog school but golf was in one of its heydays and tournament beneficiaries needed to stand in line. Instead, J. Richard "Dick" Ryan, Chair of the Guiding Eyes Board of Directors in 1977, suggested a celebrity Pro-Am tournament that would make blind golfers the "stars" of the event. Jack Ward, a friend of Ryan's and member of GEB's board as well as member of Mount Kisco Country Club, signed on as Chairman of the Golf Committee and worked tirelessly to secure sponsors and financial support to launch the event. Also on that original Golf Committee was Al Maiolo who serves today as Chairman of the Committee.

In 1977 Ryan donated the Corcoran Cup trophy to be awarded to the winning blind golfer each year. It was named after Fred Corcoran, who had recently passed away. This was an appropriate remembrance for a long-time resident of Westchester and member of the Golf Hall of Fame. Fred had spent a lifetime in golf, had been the Director of the PGA Tour during its early years and was a man who loved an original idea. Later the Cribari Trophy, named for Guido Cribari, the long-time Sports Editor of Gannett's Westchester-Rockland Newspapers and early supporter of the Golf Classic, began to be presented to the second place blind golfer.

Early on Ryan enlisted the support of his friend and client, Ken Venturi, who became the face and soul of the event for the next 25 years and during that period formed many lasting friendships with members of the USBGA. Thanks to the early hard work of Jack Ward and others too numerous to mention, the Classic soon expanded to two golf courses, Mt.Kisco CC and Whippoorwill CC. After the passing of Jack Ward and the retirement of Dick Ryan, longtime Committee member, Al Maiolo, took over as Chair of the Classic Committee, a post he continues to hold to this day. In recent years the Classic has been hosted by two-time Super Bowl MVP Eli Manning of the NY Giants, who has continued the Venturi tradition.

The annual Corcoran Cup competition begins around 1pm on a Sunday in June and takes the rest of the day, and the Classic's fundraising event takes place the next day with members of the USBGA serving as the "star-celebrities" and playing with each foursome in the event. Following golf there is a cocktail reception and an awards dinner at which the winners of the Corcoran Cup and the Cribari Cup are announced and presented with their trophies.