

#72 - Sketch of a West Pointer – John Dawson



John Dawson was born in Grace Hospital on August 5, 1941. He's lived in Vancouver most of his life, taking time out for one year in London and 4 years in Toronto. He attended local elementary schools before going to Richmond High School. John graduated from UBC in 1964 with a Bachelor of Commerce degree (focus on economics and accounting). After receiving his CA degree in 1966, he was invited by his employer to participate in a secondment overseas, working at the firm's office in London. He jumped at the opportunity and relates, "That trip was a real turning point for me. Not only was it invaluable work experience but it was also an introduction to a completely different way of life."

He's spent a lifetime working as a Chartered Accountant (now called a Chartered Professional Accountant, CPA). John was a partner at Coopers & Lybrand (now PricewaterhouseCoopers) for 30 years, having served in Vancouver as an Assurance Partner for much of the time. He was asked to move to Toronto in 1982 for four years in an executive management position, with responsibility for marketing, planning, financial and international relationships with the other member firms around the world. This entailed a lot of travelling to various parts of the world on business – primarily the USA, Britain, Germany, Australia but also Egypt, New Zealand, Caribbean and Hong Kong.

Following retirement from PwC in 2001, he became a business advisor and served on a number of public company and not-for-profit boards, usually as the financial lead. Public companies included Sun Gro Horticulture, International Aviation Terminals and Versacold Warehousing. The not-for-profit enterprises included: serving as a director and chair of the finance and audit committee of the Canadian Blood Services in Ottawa and Bermuda, BC Financial Institution Commission, TransLink, EasyPark and several others. *As you can see, John wasn't just a worker!* John received many professional recognitions. He was actively involved in the BC Institute of Chartered Accountants and served on their board (including President) and various disciplinary tribunals and committees over the years. He was one of the founding architects of the CA School of Business, for training CA students in western Canada. In recognition of his numerous professional achievements, long-standing leadership, and ongoing volunteerism, John was named to the BC Fellowship in 1997. His peers presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012 and in 2004, he was one of only two non-member recipients of the Alberta CA Institute's Distinguished Service Award.

Giving back to his community, John has held many volunteer positions. He has been a member of the Boards of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra Society, BC and Yukon Division of the Canadian Cancer Society, Dellcrest Children's Centre in Toronto and currently with The Arts Club Theatre Society and Foundation. He volunteered for the PGA tournaments at Northview (executive capacity), the LPGA tournament at Point Grey, served as a marshal for the Vancouver Golf Tour and will be marshaling at Shaughnessy in 2023 for the LPGA tournament.

John and his wife, Carol, have two sons and three grandchildren. Carol has a BSc degree and taught high school science until they started their family. Their eldest son, Hugh, is a journalist and graduated from Queens University in Kingston. He was Business Editor and is now a Senior Editor at the Vancouver Sun. Hugh has two sons, both attending university in eastern Canada. John and Carol's second son, Steve, is a musician (mainly slide guitar) who lives in Nashville with his wife and daughter. He is a multi-Juno award winner, a solo artist, songwriter, pedal steel player, producer and engineer with his own studio in Nashville. He can often be heard on CBC and does an annual show in Vancouver, among other places. *You can check him out at stevedawson.ca.*

John started playing golf (very badly, he says) in client tournaments in the 1990's and was about to quit when his wife suggested that they take lessons. In 1997 they attended a John Jacobs Golf School in Arizona and followed up with more John Jacobs sessions over several years. *As they say, the rest is history.* John is now a very good golfer and shoots his age on a regular basis, a dozen or so times at last count.

John joined the McCleery Men's Club in the 2000's and has played on a fairly regular basis since. He saw the light in 2016 and became a member of West Point Golf Club. His list of Club victories can be viewed in the Member Gallery photo section. John has scored an albatross - on the 14th hole at McCleery in 2004 and has three holes-in-one: Riverway's 8th hole in 1999, #7 hole at McCleery in 2004 and Langara's 2nd hole in 2018. He's come close several other times, but says, "I guess those don't count!" While playing the Pronghorn Course in Bend, Oregon in 2012, he hit his first ball on the 17th hole into the desert. His second tee shot went directly into the hole! He wanted to call it a hole-in-one but everyone just laughed at him. Although close, he's never had a single digit RCGA handicap, with his lowest score being 74.

John and Carol have enjoyed many golfing vacations around the world. They went to Augusta in 2007, and on Sunday watched Zach Johnson win his green jacket. In 2008 their trip to New Zealand with a golf group took them to the North and South islands, playing Wairakei, Cape Kidnappers, Millbrook and Paraparaumu. While in South Africa in 2009, they golfed near the Serengeti game reserve at the Kruger National Park and heard a report of giraffes on the 6th green! They scrambled ahead in their carts and spotted the giraffes standing there with heads in the air looking around at them. They golfed around the Ring of Kerry in Ireland in 2010, playing Old Head, Waterville, Tralee, Ballybunion, Connemara and Limerick, while also enjoying lots of Irish hospitality in the pubs. They stayed in St. Andrews in the Kingdom of Fife for a month in 2011. John played many of the courses around Fife and joined his landlord to play all the St. Andrews courses several times – the Old, the New, the Jubilee and the Castle. He had a round with a distant relative at Carnoustie and then went up and played Royal Dornoch twice and also at Nairn. Apart from all these golf trips, some favourite vacations include a trip to the Galapagos Islands and Machu Pichu in 2011, a six-month tour of Europe in 1968 in a VW camper (after his work year in London), and several cruises – Baltic, Danube, Rhine and Douro (Portugal) - over the years.

For a number of years, John and Carol have wintered in Palm Desert and played many of the Coachella Valley's courses. A favourite is Indian Canyon South. John says that the Ferrey Group (hosted by Wayne, his brother and others) is a great group to join up with in the valley. *Many*

West Pointers have participated in the fellowship with Wayne and his cohorts. John's favourite golf courses are Royal Dornoch, any of the St. Andrews old courses and Indian Canyons in Palm Springs.

In addition to golf, John played tennis for many years and used to play singles with a buddy every Monday morning for a number of years. He has also enjoyed bike riding, especially the 100 km ride from Whistler to Pemberton Meadows and back – on his birthday for several years, until he got too old!! He enjoyed skiing with family members at Whistler for 25 years. As he aged, he worried about getting hit by a snowboarder and ruining his golf game!

John was recruited for our Executive in 2018, ably serving as Treasurer for 3 years, before succumbing to the offer to be President for 2 years. John helped to guide us through the Covid years and is enjoying his continuing relationship with the Board and members as Past President. John is congenial and always ready for a good conversation.

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