

## Sketch of a West Pointer – Mike Constantinidis



Mike was born April 7, 1951 in Suez, Egypt. At age 7, the family moved to Winnipeg. Mike and his brother loved Winnipeg but his father hated life there so they migrated west to Vancouver, where Mike attended Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School for one year and then Gladstone for the final three.

Growing up he played lots of sports, including soccer, volleyball and tennis. Later in life he joined the Abbotsford Racquet Club and played racquetball four times a week. And then as his son was getting into soccer and baseball, Mike coached or assisted the teams.

His work experience began at the former Blue Boy Hotel on Marine Drive where he served as a busboy before becoming a waiter.

After graduating from high school he went to Europe for the summer and upon his return enrolled at Langara, taking finance and investment courses. After a year he decided to visit his uncle in Winnipeg and while there was offered a job with Avco Financial. A side benefit was meeting his future wife. A year later he was transferred to Vancouver and got married.

He was transferred to Dawson Creek to run his own branch and his son was born there. Another move took the family to Abbotsford, with Mike again running the Avco office. His daughter was born in Abbotsford and Mike made a move to the Bank of B.C where he toiled for 8 years. CIBC came calling and he spent twenty years with them, mostly in Chilliwack as a financial advisor (CFP). Following retirement in 2008, a friend in White Rock sought his assistance as a broker with RBC Dominion; that work engagement lasted 6 months.

Mike met a new partner in Vancouver and they travelled together and spent winters in Palm Springs and Phoenix. She had friends in West Point Golf Club and University, so Mike joined both clubs and has had nothing but great times since. Since becoming a member of WPGC in 2017, Mike has given back to the membership by serving as Treasurer in 2021 and Social Director in 2020, a difficult time with Covid-19. He was Flight C Handicap Champion in 2020.

Golf wasn't part of life growing up for Mike and when he started working he was only able to get in a few games each year. His best round was a 79 on Chilliwack Golf Course in 1997, using just irons, as he said he never could hit woods! He's never shot in the 70's or 80's since! He met a golf professional who offered him a lesson and guaranteed he could teach Mike how to hit his woods or he wouldn't have to pay for the lesson. Mike never paid! But he watched the Golf Channel, viewed some lessons and something they said made sense to Mike. He could then hit his woods but his iron play degenerated, prompting him to say, "It's a stupid game but I love it." His unwritten goal is to be the most improved golfer in 2024. He took some lessons at the time he joined our club and although he doesn't think they worked, he commends everyone for being positive and trying to help him. He feels that his game is getting better, even though the scores don't reflect that.

When the Air Canada Championships were played at Northview Golf Course, Mike volunteered every year and found it a great experience mingling with the players.

Mike's favourite golfer is Tiger Woods, because since Mike started watching golf, Tiger has been the best. There are two golfers who Mike would love to meet and play with. The first is "the most interesting man, the mechanic, Miguel Angel Jimenez. He is a very good golfer who enjoys life, sports cars, good wine and a fine cigar. The next one is Lee Trevino for his unique golf swing – a competitive golfer but also loves to socialize and have fun."

One of Mike's favourite holidays was in 2009, the year his father turned 90. They travelled to Egypt and covered the entire country. His dad celebrated with a birthday cruise in Cairo, complete with belly dancers singing Happy Birthday! Mike's father spoke 5 languages and one of them was Arabic. They took a train to Luxor and then a river cruise up the Nile, enjoying so many beautiful Greek and Roman ruins. They visited Shark El Sheikh on the Red Sea, witnessing beautiful beaches and tourists deep-sea diving.

Mike has taken many ocean cruises and considers the 60 days spent in South America as the best. When docked in Rio de Janeiro, Mardi Gras was on. The costumes and floats were amazing. He notes that as one festival concludes, the people are already preparing for next year. He's done a "world cruise" with lots of sea days and has visited the Falklands and Antarctica.

With all the travelling Mike has done he feels fortunate to have been able to play golf in China, Cuba, Mexico, the US and hopes to play in more places while he is still able. He's single again and living in White Rock, and enjoys spending time with his children and four grandchildren.

Mike averages three golf games a week and enjoys everybody's company at West Point. He says the club has saved him from doing nothing in the summer!

*Prepared from material submitted by Mike to Lorne - February to March 2024  
Published July 17, 2024*