



Mike McSevney was born October 24, 1944 in St. John's, Antigua, West Indies - and moved to Jamaica with his family in 1945. He grew up a short distance outside of the well-known resort town of Montego Bay. While attending boarding school at Munro College in the Santa Cruz mountains, he began his love of athletics, representing his college in cricket, field hockey, tennis (vice captain), table tennis (captain) and target rifle shooting.

His employment career began with Pan American World Airways at the Montego Bay airport and he had the privilege of attending various airline courses held in New York or Miami. He also attended a supervisor's course in Buenos Aires, Argentina. With free airline travel, he enjoyed the opportunity to visit London, Hamburg, Copenhagen and numerous cities in the US and Canada, Bahamas, Cayman Islands and Curacao. After spending 5 years

Sketch of a West Pointer – Mike McSevney

with Pan Am, he was offered the position of Custom Service Manager with Jamaica's national carrier, Air Jamaica, at the Norman Manley Airport in Kingston, Jamaica. Mike then changed jobs, taking on the management of an Airline General Sales Agency. The company handled flight reservations for American Airlines, Mexicana Airlines, Cayman Airways, Taca International Airlines and ALM Antillean Airlines. Representing all these airlines required lots of travel to sales meetings in Mexico City, El Salvador, Guatemala City, Grand Cayman and Curacao.

In 1974 Mike married Sarah Wates, who with her mother had moved to Jamaica from England when Sarah was an infant. Due to the political tensions in Jamaica during the mid 70's Mike and Sarah decided to leave Jamaica and move to Canada in '78. At that time, Sarah's two children were being schooled in Victoria (staying with their grandparents). Vancouver was selected as their new address because they thought job prospects would be better. Sarah had no difficulty finding work as an Executive Secretary and worked for our first Chinese-Canadian Lieutenant Governor, David Lam. Mike took a travel agents' course and became involved in the travel industry. While working at Atlas Travel when the travel industry was emerging from teletype and phone into computerized reservations, Mike did coursework on the then-new technology at American Airlines in Dallas/Fort Worth. At that time he had the opportunity to experience a flight simulator, which he recalls as "a neat experience". In 1996 he opened Regal Travel on Thurlow at Pender and eventually moved the agency to his home office in 2008. One of his best agent's familiarization trips was to South Africa, hosted by South African Airways, visiting Durban, Port Elizabeth, George, Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg and going on a safari in Kruger National Park.

Mike started playing golf at age 25 when a friend introduced him to the game, thus getting him hooked. They played most of the courses in Jamaica but his favourite was Caymanas Golf and Country Club. His lowest handicap was 8 in those days. Mike has had two holes-in-one, the first at Seymour GCC in '92 during a Japan Air Lines travel industry tournament. He became worried and wondered how much the customary drinks were going to cost as all the participants were invited to stay for prize-giving and dinner. Luckily, JAL's general manager pulled him aside prior to dinner and asked if it would be okay for

JAL to offer all the attendees a glass of Bailey's Irish Cream on his behalf. Realizing that he was about to dodge a big bullet, Mike readily consented! His second hole-in-one occurred in 2023 on Fraserview's 13th hole when he used a 7 iron to reach the yellow flag position.

Mike's favourite golfers include Freddy Couples for his languid swing and easy way with people, Tiger Woods for his sheer brilliance on the links, and Rory McIlroy for his manner and potential for greatness. Mike recounts a beloved golf story that occurred in the days when Qantas had a Vancouver presence and hosted a travel industry tournament every year in the Lower Mainland. Similar tournaments were also being held in Qantas cities in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Hong Kong. The winning teams would be flown by Qantas to Australia for a grand finale tournament. Mike was fortunate to play in three events: Semiahmoo (came 2nd), Morgan Creek (finished 3rd) and at Northview (his team won). His winning foursome was flown business class on CP Air to Honolulu and then Qantas to Brisbane via Sydney. Upon arrival, ground transport awaited to take them to the Sanctuary Cove Resort where they played a practice round on an Arnold Palmer course (The Palms), after travelling over 20 hours from Canada. Back at the resort, everyone was presented with golf shirts, gloves, balls and shoes. The following day they played the same course in a modified Stableford format and Mike's team led after the first day. *Exhilaration!* The next morning they teed up for the final round at a Greg Norman course (The Pines), after much celebration the previous evening. The team tanked and eventually finished 4th. *Dejection!* After 3 days in Australia, Mike flew home to Vancouver as he and Sarah were scheduled to fly to Jamaica on vacation. This sounds like an amazing experience!!

His favourite golf courses are Caymanas Golf and Country Club in Kingston because of its great layout, Victoria Golf Club for its spectacular views and Coquitlam's Vancouver Golf Club, partially for its pristine condition. Most of the McSevney family vacations involve travelling back to the old country (Jamaica) where they still have family and many friends.

It was in 2017 that Michael's good friend and West Point member, Paul Levy, suggested that our Club might be a good fit for him. Paul was absolutely correct and Mike is extremely thankful for this introduction. He started shooting his age in 2022 when he scored 76 at Fraserview, 75 at Langara and 77 at McCleery. *You can't say he played favourites as to where he achieved this accomplishment.* In 2023 he did it again, shooting 78 at Fraserview. Check "Galleries/Members" on our website to view his individual and team victories. Mike has made contributions to the Club by serving on the Captain's Table for the past two seasons. He admits that he is "old school" – he loves the game of golf, the etiquette, sportsmanship and gentle ribbing of his fellow golfers. He concludes by saying, "WPGC provides all of the above and as long as I am relatively healthy, I plan to continue playing as long as I can."

Prepared from excellent material submitted by Mike to Lorne - January 2024
Published June 20, 2024