

Gary Player - Return of Greatness

By Jennifer Jolly



Shortly after I first started at Boca Grove I came into the office and found that some fairy godmother had left a treasure trove of history on my desk. There were marketing pieces from the developer, newspaper clippings from the 80s, black and white photographs, even 35mm slides – remember those? When we needed a projector??!

I was like a kid on Christmas morning! I dug through the files, devoured every article, held those slides up to the light trying to figure out who was who and what was what. It took a bit, but I finally discovered it was actually a fairy god father, Joe Janoura, who had left me this amazing gift. As a marketer, who we are, where we came from and where we are going is paramount to our success as a brand and as a community.

Wearing my marketing hat, outside of the fact we began as a citrus/orange plantation, what struck me the most was that this was Gary Player's first American home. I became obsessed with Mr. Player. I asked questions of the members, like Mr. Janoura, who had been here then. I made some solid assumptions – obviously our golf course was a main draw, but I also believed so was our community. Lush landscaping, indigenous wildlife reminding him of his South African roots and a small, welcoming membership confident and successful in their own right that having a Pro Athlete Superstar in their midst was just another day. Because, make no mistake, Mr. Player is indeed a superstar!

A quick internet search will tell you that Gary Player is the most successful international golfer of all time. His career has spanned 7 decades, turning pro at 17 in 1953. He has won 167 tournament victories including 18 majors and Grand Slams on both Tours. What the internet doesn't tell you however is that he is a kind man, a family man married 62 years to Vivienne with six children, 22 grandchildren and one great grandchild. He shared stories of his family, including eldest Jennifer's restaurant and farm in South Africa, over lunch with us in May.



On May 23 we welcomed Gary back to Boca Grove with a round of golf with Shawn Costello, Rafael Barajas and Michael Gibson. It was a magical day with several members joining up with the group as they played a course a bit different from the one Gary played in the Quadel Senior Classics, held here from 1983 to 1985. Members asked questions, received signed autographs and even hit a couple of chip shots up on the 18th green with him.

What tickled me the most though was lunch. He was wonderful as he introduced himself to the Food & Beverage team, spoke of the importance of nutrition and fitness, and just lit up when surprise lunch guest Bob Toski arrived to talk about the old days. It was the first time Shawn, Michael and I have been together and each rendered speechless! Special thanks to Susan & Gary Carter who lent us an autographed poster of Gary's win at the 1985 Quadel Senior Classic. It was the perfect finishing touch!!

Outside of the insider stories I would never know, I really enjoyed just getting to know Gary. I love that he uses honey to sweeten his coffee and was genuinely excited and impressed that we had our own apiary. His passion for health, nutrition and fitness was truly inspiring. He spoke of how he received his first set of dumbbells from his brother when he was just 8 years old. He has never missed a day of exercise, still

completing 1,000 crunches a week! He attributes his athletic success, strong mind and body, longevity and happiness to his lifelong commitment and philosophy regarding fitness. I don't know about all of you, but my marketing mind is thinking he should be invited back for our Sports & Wellness Center ground breaking on April 20, 2020. Gary lives our Mission Statement.

In the meantime, we will try to stay up with Boca Grove alum Gary Player as he continues to travel the world in the name of golf. In addition to Dan Pendola's quarterly article "Player's Corner", which was started by Heather Dupree and I based on Gary's book, "Gary Player's Black Book", we will also post on Facebook and include updates as we have them. All the best to you Gary, our Black Knight! 🍊



Mission

To deliver a boutique lifestyle set in an oasis of uncompromising beauty with facilities and activities that encourage healthy mind, body experiences, a strong sense of community and lasting friendships.