

# Sisters in Swing

Female golf instructors making their mark in the Austin area

By Art Stricklin

Special to this section

What Austin's female golf teachers lack in numbers, they make up in skill, ability and dedication.

"I really believe great teaching is gender neutral," Barton Creek golf teacher Barbara Puett said. "It's all about communication."

Along with Austin Country Club's Ann Marie Gildersleeve, and a handful of female golf pros in the area, they're three of the growing number of female teachers in Austin.

"I teach both male and female golf clients, but for the female students or the beginners, I'm pretty laid back," says Tina Bradley Mayers, the daughter of legendary Austin golf professional Jackson Bradley. She has teamed with her husband Buck to form the Buck Mayers School of Golf at Circle C Golf Club in South Austin.

She began her career at Balcones Country Club, working with her father and serving in every role in the golf shop from cart cleanout to golf teaching.

"I was there only four months when I discovered I enjoyed the business of golf," Bradley Mayers said. "I learned a lot working with my dad, but I'm a lot better teacher now than I was when I started in 1988, because I have learned a lot more."

Puett, who has co-authored several golf books, along with winning the city women's golf title a half-dozen times, coaching Tom Kite's junior high school golf team, and being named the Statesman's Golf Teacher of the Year in 1989, said learning is the key to good teaching.

She picked up much of her teaching style from longtime former Austin Country Club head pro Harvey Penick, who Puett watched for years at Austin C.C.

"Harvey was a master psychologist before his time and I've had to train myself to tell people what they're doing right, not what they're always doing wrong," she said.

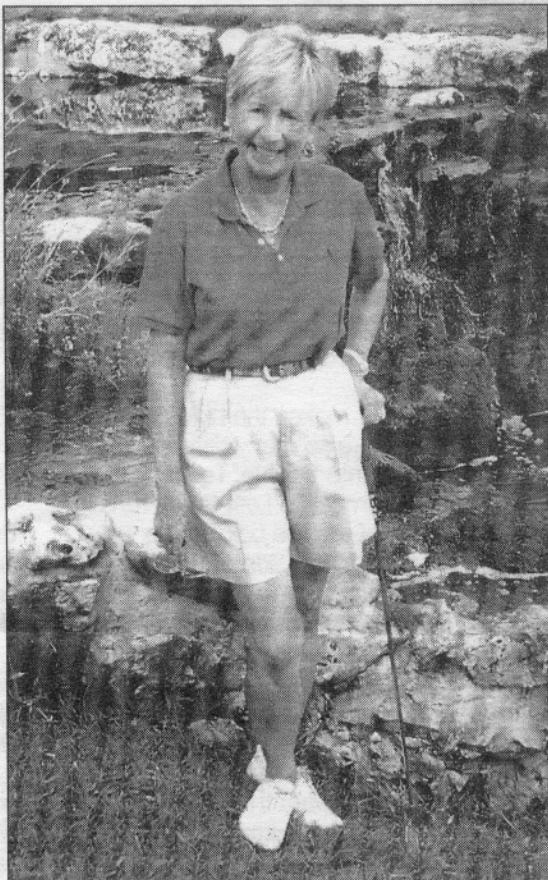


Photo courtesy of Barbara Puett

Barbara Puett, who teaches golf at Barton Creek, names golf great Henry Penick as the inspiration for her teaching style.

"There is more than one way to teach a swing and Harvey could teach the best or the newest golfers. That's what I'm trying to do."

Gildersleeve was recently named one of the top 50 Junior Golf Teachers by a national publication and Austin C.C. head pro Dale Morgan said she has a special talent for the younger players:

"It's really a great connection and communication."

While the University of Texas has produced several excellent LPGA players, the only

two who currently live in the area are Cindy Figg-Currier and former U.S. Women's Open Champion Hilary Linke, whose husband is attending graduate school at UT.

Females may not rule the game of golf in Austin yet, but they're making steady progress in the teaching area, one successful student at a time.

Art Stricklin is an award-winning Texas golf writer and the author of eight books including the recently published "Links, Lore & Legends: The Story of Texas Golf."

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