

Benediction / Tribute to Ted Oakey:

On Saturday October 4, 1958, a 56 year-old Bobby Jones was invited to St. Andrews Scotland, to serve as Captain of the American Team to compete for the Eisenhower Trophy in the World Amateur Golf Team Championship. In conjunction with that trip, Mr. Jones was recognized and awarded by the Provost of the town of St. Andrews with the Freedom of the City designation. Less than ten people had ever been bestowed with this honor, and the last American to have been accorded so was Dr. Benjamin Franklin in 1759.

It was Mr. Jones' first return trip to St. Andrews in over 20 years, and of course all recall St. Andrews was the site of his victory in the Open Championship in 1927 and of his British Amateur Championship in 1930 – the year of his Grand Slam. His love for St. Andrews is no secret, and it was at his Freedom speech where he proclaimed: "I could take out of my life *everything* except my experiences at St. Andrews and I'd still have a rich, full life."

But it was Mr. Jones' comments about two things: (1) about international team golf and (2) about friendship through golf, which he spoke about at that Freedom ceremony in 1958 which ring poignant to the Ponce Matches:

"For the fostering of friendship and understanding on an international scale is also the keynote of this event. We shall all be trying our very best to win in the golf competition because our high respect for our fellow competitors and for the game of golf demands that we do so. But all of us have come here with the hope that attachments will be formed here and reports will emanate from here which will provide an impetus towards a growing friendship among nations of the world." (excerpt from *Golf is My Game* by Robert Tyre Jones, Jr.).

"I think I have never played a tournament round from which I did not come with a feeling of warmth and heightened regard for my opponent or playing companion. The championships have been very much worth the effort they cost, but more important by far have been the expanding interests they brought and the avenues to friendships with individuals and groups of people they opened for me. That these rewards should endure so long makes it easy to see why for me golf will always be the greatest game." (excerpt from *Golf is My Game* by Robert Tyre Jones, Jr.).

As many of you know, earlier this year, American Ponce player, UVA fraternity brother and our true friend, Henry Oakey lost his father, Ted Oakey, to cancer. Ted Oakey will always be regarded as a Friend of the Ponce. A resident of Charlottesville, Virginia – and a Hampden-Sydney man - who had the love of the

game of golf – several years ago became a member of Royal Dornoch – one of the finest links courses in the world.

In 2012, a core of us American Ponce players - went over early to Scotland prior to our full team match vs the Brits. We ventured to Dornoch, where Mr. Oakey graciously invited us in – we played a few memorable rounds of golf with him – capped off by a wonderful group dinner in the Royal Dornoch clubhouse with some of his old Virginia buddies –our view overlooking 18 – still light out at 10pm, watching the groups come in...

It is a memory that we be etched in all our minds for years to come... In short, Mr. Oakey was a Virginia gentleman.

Shortly after Mr. Oakey passed, Henry forwarded an email along to a group of us – it was sent by one of Mr. Oakey’s dear Scottish friends – Mr. Raymond Wood - who had just received the sad news of his death. Mr. Wood sent along the following:

“One Saturday evening in the mid 1990s, in an eating establishment in the little town of Lossiemouth in North Scotland, a singsong was started up by a table of a few local couples out for a relaxing meal: in the restaurant, there was also a group of four golfing visitors from Virginia who were taking on some Scottish fayre to fuel them up for the next days’ challenges on the links at Moray Golf Club. As is often, but not always, the case communication developed between the two groups and so was started a remarkable friendship between the Virginian golfers and the Scots. The visits to Scotland from Richmond and Charlottesville became annual and the Scots played golf each year with their visiting friends and enjoyed meals (with a wee dram) together after the day’s labours.

R. Stedman Oakey, Jr. – known to us all as Teddy -was one of those visiting guys from Virginia and, over subsequent years, Teddy was also one who faithfully returned to our shores each year to play real links golf. He fooled us a little by turning up one summer and announcing that he had changed his golf swing and was now playing left handed. Equally as able left-handed as right-handed, he continued to win the Scots’ pounds.

Recent years saw Teddy’s energy levels reduce and, now and again, he would take a day’s rest from golf on the annual pilgrimage to Scotland: but his Scottish friends were not aware until more recently that Teddy was starting a more serious form of combat with illness. We, his friends in Lossiemouth and Elgin, were deeply saddened to learn that Teddy has lost his fight earlier this month but we shall all cherish the memories of his quiet, fun-loving approach to life: he was the absolute gentleman at all times and we readily appreciated that he did really enjoy taking on the golf courses in Scotland, providing, of course, the sun kept shining on the links.

Long may be the friendships and fellowship which is greatly enjoyed between golfers from Virginia and Scotland be nurtured and renewed: Teddy was a fantastic ambassador for how golfing friendships can be struck, enjoyed, and continued.

We shall miss him dearly.

In closing, we would like to thank the golfers from Virginia who have come to North Scotland to join us: long may you return to our shores and play the game of golf.”

The above-message was sent on behalf of the Woods, Clarks, Elliots, Smiths and Youngs of North Scotland.

Wow - to me, that endearing note says it all about golf and what it represents – Mr. Wood’s words very well could be the epilogue to Bobby Jones’ speech from 50 years ago. It all comes full circle does it not...

Somewhere I would like to think that both Ted Oakey and Bobby Jones are looking down and are appreciative of what the Ponce de Leon is doing – both here and abroad -, the friendships we are forming - and what we represent as far as team golf competition and sportsmanship -

With that, in closing of this ceremony, I turn it over to our 2012 Chairman, Wes Battle for an announcement –

Wes:

Mr. Oakey once told Henry and me that if he had it to all over again that he wouldn’t care so much about the scores on a specific hole or round, but would have spent more time enjoying the camaraderie of the foursomes, enjoying existing friendships or making new ones.

And as much as we all want to win this helmet, I think that is the what the Ponce should be about – enjoying the company of good friends and making new ones.

It is with great honor that I announce that the American Spirit Award will be forever named the “Ted Oakey Spirit Award” given to the American player who best exemplifies team spirit, sportsmanship and leadership. The Ted Oakey winner is the American who best embodies the Ponce, both on and off the course.