

February 28, 2002

Selection Committee
Kentucky Athletic Hall of Fame

Dear Sir, Madam,

It is a honor to offer my perspective of Elmore Just's contributions to the game of golf.

I've been fortunate to have the opportunity to discuss the game with golf's leading equipment manufacturers: Eli Callaway, Karsten Solhiem, Barney Adams and of course, Elmore Just. Though each of these men professed a deep "love of the game", there was a polar difference in how this "love" evidenced itself in their careers and products.

At heart, I believe Callaway, Solhiem and Adams felt golf needed to be "fixed": that the game's inherent difficulty was a serious "problem" to which their "game improvement" engineering provided ingenious solutions. Making golf enjoyable for those without the time or inclination to actually learn the game—that was their mission.

Elmore didn't believe golf needed fixing. As every true lover, he recognized the object of his passion as being nearly perfect...just the way it was. Elmore based his career on one indisputable truth: persimmon headed woods and forged irons provide an accomplished player the most subtle, most satisfying experiences on the golf course.

To fully appreciate this truth requires a fair degree of commitment to learning the game. Elmore saw this necessary learning curve and time commitment as an asset to the game. And he we knew whereof he spoke; unlike the others, Elmore was a player. He'd made the investment in time and practice to build a sound golf swing.

His reward (one which he felt every serious golfer deserved) was experiencing the exquisite neural charge of a balata ball struck dead center on a persimmon head, and the muted click of a solidly struck muscle backed 3 iron drawing gently to the center of the green. He was skilled at shot making, working the ball—he was determined that these highest expressions of the game would not disappear under the waves of titanium heads the size of frying pans.

Elmore was neither a purist nor a traditionalist. He *was* an accomplished player whose products were designed to heighten the satisfaction of good players. As a business man, he stoically suffered the cost of refusing to degrade the feel and accuracy of his products to make it possible for the absolute beginner to chop it around in under a hundred and fifty strokes.

Whole generations now play the game without any concept of it's potential for nuance and creativity. They've accustomed themselves to the dead feel and unworkability of new technology in exchange for an occasional random drive that goes a mile (usually in the wrong direction). In fact, as Elmore often pointed out, by being so forgiving, at a certain point this game improvement technology actually hinders a player's advance by failing to provide the feedback necessary to refine one's action.

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Elmore Just was a brave man who stood practically alone against the marketing might of golf's corporate giants. He never shirked the responsibility to tell the truth about the game he loved. He said what he knew: The skilled playing of the game eventually yields more pleasures and satisfactions than a \$1000 driver could ever supply.

I've yet to meet a man with more integrity and commitment to protecting and promulgating the values which make the game of golf unique.

Sincerely,

George Tucker
Managing Partner

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