



The bronze statue of Pete and Alice Dye from their playing days that greets visitors to Crooked Stick Golf Club was unveiled during the club's 50th anniversary celebration in 2014.

PAIR OF ACES

All Golf All the Time for Pete, Alice Dye

By Tom Schuman

EDITOR'S NOTE: Fifth of a 2019 series on people and organizations that have made a dramatic impact on Indiana. The story of Pete and Alice Dye began in the July-August BizVoice®. If you did not view Part 1, we encourage you to read it via the archives at www.indianachamber.com or click the QR code.



We borrow the words of *Golf Digest* writer Ron Whitten upon the death of Alice Dye on February 1 of this year:

Alice and Pete were a couple for the ages. Alice was Bacall to Pete's Bogart, Hepburn to his Tracy, Nancy to his Ronald, Ethel to his Fred.

Photos on Pages 52, 53, 54 (left), 55 (bottom) and 56 provided by Chris Wirthwein, author of *Crooked Stick Golf Club: A story of the original masterpiece from America's first couple of golf, Pete and Alice Dye.*

Alice, an Indianapolis native, passed away three weeks short of her 92nd birthday. She was commonly known as the “First Lady” of golf course architecture. Pete, age 93 and suffering from severe Alzheimer’s, is generally regarded as changing the game of golf with his unique style and attention to detail. Add in sons Perry and P.B., prolific golf course designers in their own rights, and you have America’s “First Family of Golf.”

What better way to tell the story of Pete and Alice Dye – with plenty of assistance from family, friends, collaborators and more – than through an 18-hole journey through portions of their fascinating and impactful lives. We presented the front nine here in July-August before pausing in the clubhouse and returning with the back nine in this issue.

No. 10: No paperwork, just promises

In an understatement, Pete Dye was not a big fan of the business side of his work. There are multiple accounts of meetings with lawyers and others prior to starting a new project. Pete’s mantra, paraphrased: “I don’t do contracts. He (the owner) can fire me anytime he wants to and if he’s not happy, he doesn’t have to pay me.” The response from the person(s) who wanted the Dye magic to happen: “When are you going to start?”

There are more than a few examples of Pete charging a grand total of \$1 for work on college courses. On the other hand, Curt Miller (a 52-year member of Crooked Stick) says he was president of the club when Pete was upgrading the course for the upcoming PGA tournament (1991). “I had to battle him because he’s not real familiar with a budget.”

Perry Dye offers that the one thing that comes to his mind right away when talking about his parents is their honesty.

“My dad was never in it for the money. He would quote a fee and stick with it. If it took you three times as long, that was OK. You paid for it.”

No. 11: Simply working hard

When Tony Pancake came to Crooked Stick as the golf pro in 2003, he says he explained to Dye that he knew nothing about building golf course but would love to learn.

“He said, ‘I’m starting this new golf course down at French Lick. I need a ride, pick me up Monday at 6 o’clock.’ It was the first day of December, temperature in the 30s, six inches of snow on the ground. Pete (in his upper 70s) started walking the course at 9:00 in the morning. At 4:00, I was dead tired, and he was still going strong.

“We would walk through these hills, valleys, woods and he’d say, ‘There it is. Can’t you see it. That’s where the green will be, the tee, the fairway.’ He just had this visibility to see what a golf hole would look like. That’s a day I will never forget.”

P.B. Dye adds, “When you’re working with the Earth, you better listen to it. You don’t want to fight Mother Nature.”

No. 12: Harbour Town

The Dyes’ partnership with Jack Nicklaus at Harbour Town in 1969 was a pivotal moment in Pete’s escalating design career. Arnold Palmer was the only player under par in winning the inaugural Heritage Classic that year.

But the tourney also produces another classic Dye story. It was recounted this way in Pete’s book (*Bury Me in a Pot Bunker*):

“Jim (Ferriell, Jr., an accomplished player who went on to become head pro at Crooked Stick from 1978-2003) spied me standing under a tree off to the side of the 16th hole, watching intently as he and Davis Love and two other professionals played their practice rounds. Each drove down the fairway and bent their tee shots around a giant pine tree, which guided them away from the huge waste area.

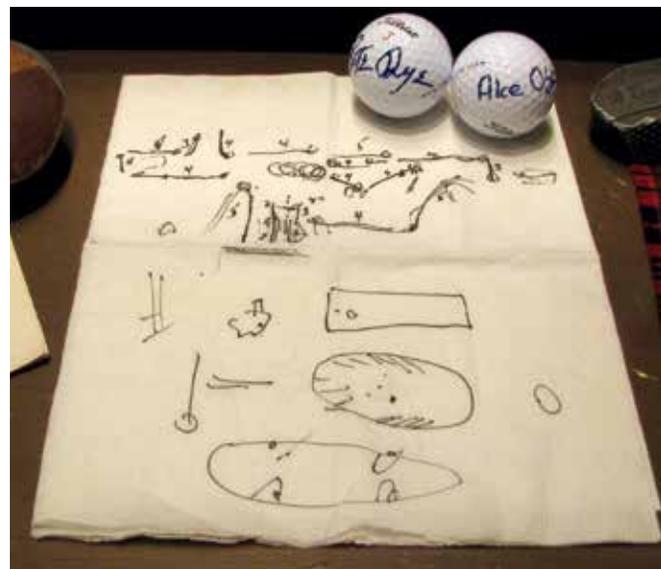
“According to Jim, when he came to the hole the next day, that pine tree had magically disappeared, and without its presence to guide them, he and all his playing partners pulled their drivers in the crusty



Large crowds gather on the spectator mound on No. 16 crafted by Pete for the 1991 PGA Championship. Rory McIlroy (right), then 23 years old, was the winner of the 2012 BMW Championship. His comment during the week: “I got to meet Pete Dye for the first time ... which is pretty cool.”



Jack Nicklaus, teeing it up at the 1991 PGA Championship, says today that, "Any time I can talk about Pete and Alice, I have a smile on my face."



Citing severe slopes and rugged terrain, Pete initially said a course could not be built at the French Lick Resort site. He returned a short time later with this initial layout on a napkin.



waste area. As Jim beat his driver into the ground, he said he saw me standing in the very same spot with a wry smile on my face."

No. 13: Jack

Part 1 and this story have already referenced the man generally considered the greatest golfer of all time. And while he came up short on the course a few times against Pete, he won by virtue of a brief partnership and long friendship.

When building The Golf Club in central Ohio in the mid-1960s, Pete brought Nicklaus to the site to get his insight on a few of the hole designs. In 1969, Nicklaus was asked by real estate developer Charles Fraser to assist with creating what became the Harbour Town course.

When Nicklaus said he didn't know how to design a golf course but was aware of someone who did, Fraser responded that he had never heard of Pete. Nicklaus' reply: "You will."

Nicklaus lays out the partnership.

"The fee was 40,000 dollars. I made 23 visits there in a Lear jet. We got done with the golf course and Pete had taken the \$40,000 we made and put it back in the golf course and I never got reimbursed a dime for my airplane.

"I said, 'That's not a very good business deal.' He said, 'That's what we do.'"

The partnership extended to several more courses, with Alice also involved.

"I said, 'Pete, I love the experience, but I can't afford you.' He put our design fee back into every golf course. It was a great learning experience, and I had a blast doing it.

Nicklaus, the winner of a record 18 major tournaments, has gone on to design more than 400 courses in 45 countries.

"If Pete had never called me, I never would have gone out there, never would have got involved at Harbour Town and never would have had this career. I just think Pete was way ahead of his time. He did things that nobody else would do. He took a chance on them and

that's why he was so good. He was just brilliant at what he did."

No. 14: French Lick

When Steve Ferguson, chairman of the Cook Group, gave Pete an aerial photo and topographical drawings of the proposed course site, the reported response was, "I don't think I can build a golf course there." The two drove around and through as much of the wooded area as they could anyway. By the middle of the next week, Pete had sketched a course layout onto a napkin.

This was 2005. Construction began in April 2006 and The Pete Dye Course at French Lick opened in 2009. It has become a premier destination for golfers from around the country and beyond.

"The thing that separated Pete was that you could just tell it was going to be personal to him," Ferguson imparts. "It wasn't just a business deal. What really persuaded me that he was the guy was his passion."

Perry believes French Lick "is a monument for the state of Indiana. It's a bucket list type of golf course. There's not many like it."

Alice, of course, was part of the team. There was that bunker on the sixth hole that Dave Harner (director of golf operations at French Lick Resort) says was gone the next day after her objection that Mary Jones (the persona for the average female player) wouldn't be able to hit her tee shot over the impediment.

Harner was also able to persuade Alice, after initial reservations, to put her name on an annual women's tournament that is now celebrating its 10th year. When she did agree and Harner wanted to compensate her in some way, Alice said, "Just send me a couple of those nice West Baden sheets every now and then. So I did."

No. 15: Pete and Bill

Ferguson draws the insightful comparison between his longtime boss and close friend, Bill Cook, and Pete.

"Pete is a visual guy, like Bill Cook. He didn't give you a set of plans. About one in 2,000 people have an imagination; fewer than that

Scenic views are just part of the attraction of The Pete Dye Course at French Lick, rated the top public course in the state each year since 2010 by *GolfWeek Magazine*.



have real vision,” Ferguson contends. “Bill Cook had real vision. He could look at something as it was and see how it could be. Pete was the same way about golf courses. He could look at a piece of ground and visualize how it was going to be.”

One more similarity, courtesy of Ferguson.

“Bill Cook, we put 35 million dollars into West Baden Hotel on a handshake. Pete Dye built a course on a handshake. Pete was just one of those people with special visions and abilities. In a lot of respects, he changed the game of golf.”

The course work was a return to the scene as Pete was the

winner of the 1957 Midwest Amateur Championship on the Donald Ross Course at French Lick.

No. 16: Artist’s touch

As we did on No. 8 in Part 1, we’ll let the authorities tell the story:

- Miller, on the ongoing dedication to improving Crooked Stick: “Pete’s an artist. It’s a painting that never got finished. He’s always touching up the painting. Alice was always the steady force. She never got upset. She never got bothered.”
- Wayne Timberman, a close friend for 70 years: “Pete was the artist with all the creativity and Alice the pragmatist. That was a good combination.” He adds that Pete “was good on the stage. To my knowledge, he never prepared a speech. He’s the only guy I know who literally did what he wanted to do every day of his life.”
- Nicklaus: “Pete was more creative than anybody. He did things that nobody else would do. He took a chance on them, and that’s why he was so good.”

No. 17: Giving back

Pete and Alice paid for the college educations of many young people with an interest in golf. P.B. says that when Indiana native Mickey Powell, who went on to become president of the PGA, gave his father a check to pay him back, “Dad just tore it in half and said, ‘Pass it on.’ That’s the way we were raised.”

The golf family extended far and wide. P.B. reveals, “We always said you can’t teach a highway builder to love the game of golf, but you can teach a kid who loves golf to run a bulldozer in one day. We went to golfers building our golf courses. The ‘family’ that we have acquired has been just outstanding. We all stay together.”

Perry claims he knew he was in trouble when his parents took their trip to Scotland in the early 1960s and brought home a caddy. In a more serious tone, he asserts, “Mother was just a lady that took care of people. She always believed in opening the doors for other people.



Pete and Alice in 1991, the year of the PGA Championship at Crooked Stick and two years before the U.S. Women’s Open.



Introducing Pete for his induction into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2008, legendary competitor Greg Norman says, “I got my love of golf course design from Pete. He designs golf courses everybody loves to play.”



Mickey Powell, who went on to become president of the PGA of America, was one of many young people who were able to go to college (Powell at what is now the University of Indianapolis) through Pete and Alice’s generosity.

She shared her life with everybody.”

As a teen, Timberman says Pete and Alice taught him much more off the golf course than on – including “wearing button down shirts and khaki pants, standing up when someone came into the room, how to write thank you notes.”

Chris Wirthwein, author of two editions of a book recapping the history of Crooked Stick: “They loved golf and wanted to do everything they could to advance golf. Is that

giving back? It’s bigger than that.”

No. 18: Pete and Alice

P.B. is adamant in stating, “I can tell you that my mother and father loved the game of golf, and the game of golf has loved them back. I can’t imagine anyone ever saying mom and dad have taken from the game of golf. They’ve always given.”

Whitten, the *Golf Digest* writer: “If you

consider Pete Dye a genius, as I do, then you absolutely must concur that Alice Dye was the genius behind the genius.”

Harner: “They accomplished so much, yet they’re the most humble, unassuming people. They’re big, but didn’t get too big for the game.”

And Wirthwein, who spent so many hours with the Dyes in compiling the Crooked Stick history: “My impression is that without the other, there would be no Pete and Alice Dye.”

Indiana Impact |

The Dye Designs web site lists 22 Indiana golf courses designed by the family

Ackerman-Allen Course at Birck Boilermaker Golf Complex
Purdue University, West Lafayette
Pete Dye
1997

The Bridgewater Club
Carmel
Pete Dye
2003

Brickyard Crossing
Indianapolis
Pete and Alice Dye
1993

Crooked Stick Golf Club
Carmel
Pete and Alice Dye
1964

Dye’s Walk Country Club
Greenwood
Pete and Alice Dye
1962

Eagle Creek Golf Club-Pines Course
Indianapolis
Pete Dye
1975

Eagle Creek Golf Club-Sycamore Course
Indianapolis
Pete Dye
1975

Forest Park Golf Course
Brazil
Pete Dye
1963

The Fort Golf Resort
Indianapolis
Pete Dye
1977

French Lick Resort-Pete Dye Course
French Lick
Pete and Alice Dye
2008

Greenbelt Golf Course
Columbus
Pete Dye
1972

Harbor Links Golf Club
Liberty
PB Dye
2002

Harbour Trees Golf Club
Noblesville
Pete Dye
1972

Kampen Course at Birck Boilermaker Golf Complex
Purdue University, West Lafayette
Pete Dye
1997

Maple Creek Country Club
Indianapolis
Pete and Alice Dye
1961

Mystic Hills Golf Club
Culver
Pete and PB Dye
1998

Oak Tree Golf Course
Plainfield
Pete Dye
1962

Plum Creek Country Club
Carmel
Pete Dye
1997

Sahm Golf Course
Indianapolis
Pete and Alice Dye
1962

The Club at Chatham Hills
Westfield
Pete Dye
2016

Tippecanoe Country Club
Monticello
Pete Dye (remodel)
1961

Woodland Country Club
Carmel
Pete Dye
2002