



save muny
THE MUNY CONSERVANCY

Muny cannot continue to highlight an important side of the American story unless we take action to preserve it as a resource for its community.

Stephanie Meeks, National Trust for Historic Preservation



1924-1925



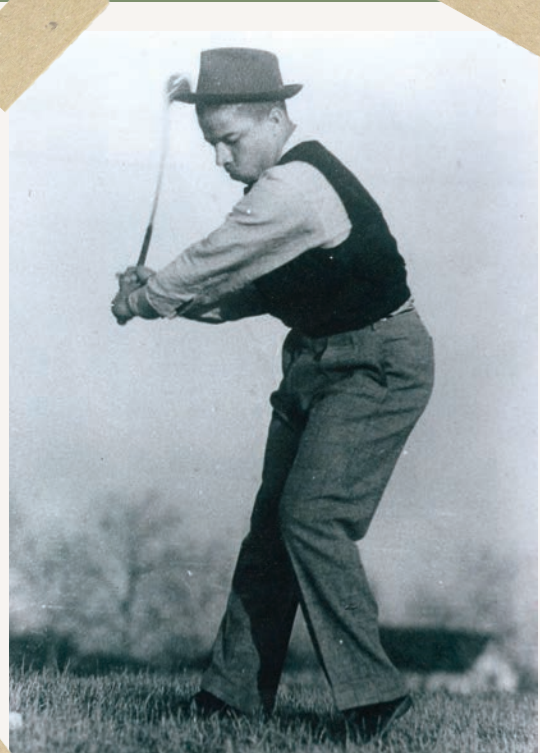
Fareway No. 11 Looking toward Green.



Fareway No. 3 Looking toward Green.



Fareway No. 12 Looking toward Green.



Alfred Tup Holmes in his early 20s.
(Holmes Family Archive)



Fareway No. 13. Partly finished.



#9-9

1930's

As the first public course in the South to racially desegregate, Lions Municipal Golf Course is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It's a big title, but the story was simple. In late 1950 – following the Supreme Court's decision in *Sweatt v. Painter* but well before *Brown v Board of Education* – two black youths walked onto the course and began playing.

Still in the throes of the Jim Crow era, there were not yet any integrated public golf courses in the south. The Munny staff working that day called City Hall to seek advice on how to handle the trespassing

youth. After a quick discussion with council members, Mayor Taylor Glass said, ***“Let them play”***.

This simple act – allowing a couple of kids to finish their round – is how Munny earned the title of the first desegregated municipal Southern golf course. Soon after, and with the formal recognition of the Austin City Council in early 1951, Lions Municipal Golf Course was open to all who came to play. Unlike other southern courses that would follow – years later – Munny's desegregation came peacefully, without protest or court order.



The Muny Conservancy

*Preserving and Promoting Lions Municipal Golf Course
Historic, Inclusive, Affordable*

Ben Crenshaw,
Co-Chair

Scotty Sayers,
Co-Chair

Jerry Bell

Lori Beveridge

Noel Bridges

Ray Castillo

Ed Clements

Richard Craig

Matt Davis

Sgt. Tim Gaestel

Angela Garcia

Mike Haggarty

Bob Kay

Albert Koehler

Bill Miller

Volma Overton

Holly Reed

Nav Sooch

Shelley
Washington

Steve Wiener

Mark Williams

Greg Wooldridge

The information contained in this book has been assembled to provide an easy historical reference to many of the events leading up-to-and following the desegregation of Lions Municipal Golf Course in 1950, and contains the material provided to the National Parks Service as part of the application for inclusion on their National Register of Historic Places which was approved in 2016.

The reasons for saving Muny are many---the preservation of the historic 97-year-old golf course, saving a 141-acre green space that is also a wildlife sanctuary sitting on a water recharge zone with hundreds of heritage oak and pecan trees, and most important, celebrating the Civil Rights history that took place on the property.

Lions Municipal is the busiest golf course in Austin, with nearly 60,000 rounds of golf played annually. It is the practice course for numerous high school golf teams, the site of UIL championships and the home of the Austin Junior Golf Academy. Muny provides affordable golf for people of all backgrounds, and for all ages and ability of golfers. We thank you for your attention to the history that makes it critical that we Save Muny. For Good.

Best regards,

Ben Crenshaw
Co-chair Muny Conservancy

Scott Sayers
Co-chair Muny Conservancy



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Why a golf course matters so much to Austin

Civil Rights Landmark

Research based on archival records and oral histories has revealed that, in 1950, two black youths played a round of golf at the course, four years before the racial integration of schools and other public facilities was ruled by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Lions Municipal is recognized by historians as the first municipal course in the South to voluntarily desegregate.

This unique history has garnered national attention for the course, known locally as “Muny”. In 2009, the Texas State Historical Commission approved a marker for the course, in recognition of its groundbreaking desegregation. In 2016, the National Park Service added Muny to the National Register of Historic Places and the National Trust for Historic Preservation identified the course as one of “America’s Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places.”



1940's



Course Construction, 1920s

Rich Sports History

Around 60,000 rounds are played each year at Lions Municipal. World Golf Hall of Famers Ben Crenshaw and Tom Kite grew up playing the course. Crenshaw purchased the putter he used to win the 1984 Masters Tournament from the Lions gift shop. In 1950, Ben Hogan famously began his comeback to the game in an exhibition match with World Golf Hall of Famer Harvey Penick against UT golfers Morris Williams and Ed Hopkins. Former World Heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis—an avid golf enthusiast—visited the course twice in the early 1950s after hearing about its integration, shooting near par in 1953.

Endangered Urban Open Space

Lions Municipal Golf course sits on 141 acres in the heart of Austin. Open spaces benefit the public because they support the health of the local environment, increase the value of surrounding land, and overall enhance quality of life for the community. Once an urban area loses a green space, it is gone forever.

The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce commissioned a study comparing Austin to cities deemed as competitors for new business. The report concluded that Austin was “behind” Phoenix, Denver, Seattle, and Raleigh/Durham in access to open spaces.



Newly-formed Save Munny citizen group, 1973



Ben Crenshaw at Munny, 1973

About Lions Municipal Golf Course

Lions Municipal Golf Course was built in 1924 at a time when the only other course in Austin was a country club. The land was originally owned by Colonel George Washington Brackenridge who gifted the land to the school in 1910. Brackenridge was a UT regent for 25 years, until 1911, and later for two more years, until 1919, a year before he died, making him the longest-serving regent in school history. UT has leased the land to the city since 1936 but announced in 2011 that the lease would not be renewed after it expired in May 2019. Since then, the course has been on a five-month rolling lease, as negotiations continue between the City of Austin, The University of Texas, The Munny Conservancy and the Save Historic Munny District.

Golf for the People - How Muny Became a Home for Everyday Golfers

Lions Municipal Golf Course was established in 1924 by Austin Lions Club members with a vision for a modern, inclusive municipal golf course. The first public course in Austin, it was constructed on a leased portion of wooded, fairly level, riparian land—a 503-acre parcel given to the University of Texas in 1910 by one of its benefactors, George W. Brackenridge. The golf course was designed by Austin Lions Club member B.F. Rowe, who also supervised construction. A brick clubhouse designed by local architect Edwin Kreisle was added in 1930. The Lions Club operated the golf course until donating it to the City of Austin in 1936. In 1936 eminent golf course architect Albert Tillinghast contributed to the course enhancements, redesigning several holes. In 1926, Lions Club member John H. Tobin described the grounds:

“Raising your eyes you behold the beautiful scenery which is an inspiration to the player”. The eighteen-hole course offers scenic views of surrounding hills. Today, Lions Municipal remains an urban green space. The grounds evoke a park-like setting enjoyed by walkers and golfers alike. (National Register of Historic Places)

“It is proposed to have a modern up-to-date golf course where all citizens of Austin interested in golfing can play...”

- Austin Lions Club

THE AUSTIN STATESMAN
AUSTIN, TEXAS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 1924

LIONS CLUB TO BUILD MUNICIPAL GOLFING COURSE

L. Theo Bellmont, director of athletics, University of Texas: “I think it very happy that they have solved the problem of affording business men outdoor recreation facilities, who, because of expenses, would not be able to join the Country club. The Lions are due all sorts of credit for this.”

REGENTS CONSENT TO LOCATE LINKS ON VARSITY LAND

Brackenridge Tract West of City Will Be Site of Newest Civic Project Proposed by the Lions Club.

LOCATION IS IDEAL

SUNDAY AMERICAN-STATESMAN,
SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 1926.

Muny Golf Course Makes Record Growth In Two Years

What They Say.

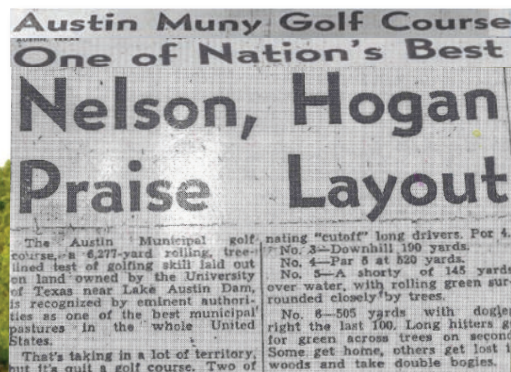
Harvey Penick, professional of Austin Country club: “The layout of the Lions’ club municipal golf course and the conditions of the greens is equal to any in the state, and shows promise of making one of the best golf resorts in the south. I think an open golf tournament held there in the winter time would go far toward letting people know of its value.”

“
*One of the finest
courses in this part
of the country...*

- Byron Nelson, 1948

”

World Golf Hall of Famer Ben Hogan played with Harvey Penick (against Ed Hopkins and Morris Williams Jr.) in an exhibition match at Muni in 1950. During the match, it is said that Hogan stood on the seventh tee box and asked “Where’s the fairway?”. He went on to birdie this now-famous Par 4. After the match, Hogan apparently commented that the course was “so good, it makes you think you’re not in Texas.” One month later he would win the U.S. Open at Merion, his fourth major championship.



The fairway at “Hogan’s Hole”, No. 16.

About George Washington Brackenridge

George Washington Brackenridge never attended the University of Texas, but he is one of the most important figures in the school's history and, even in death, a central figure in the "Save Mundy" campaign, which dates to the early 1970s.

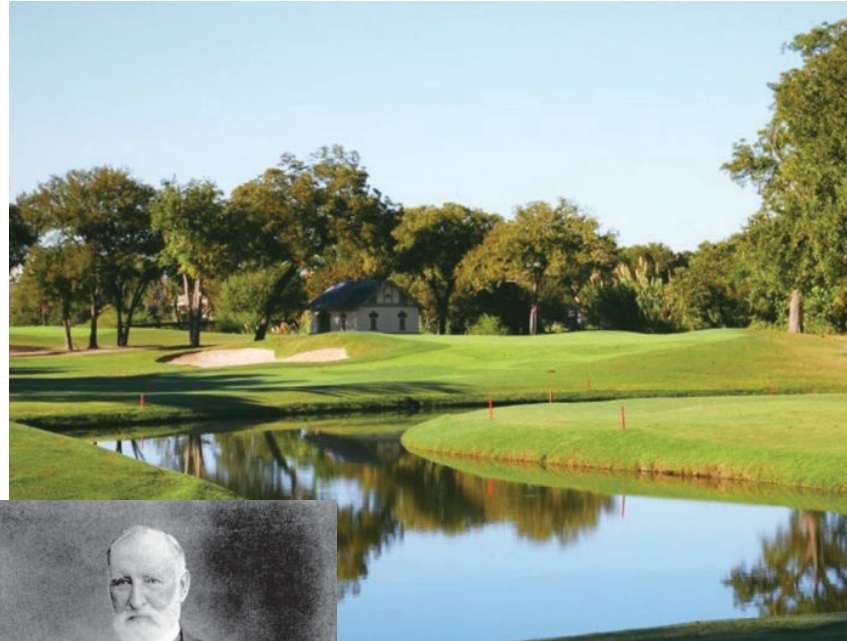
Brackenridge settled in San Antonio after the Civil War and made his fortune in banking and infrastructure investing. He was a UT regent for 25 years, until 1911, and later for two more years, until 1919, a year before he died, making him the longest-serving regent in school history. He donated freely to various causes, but especially to support education. At one point, shortly before his death, he offered to underwrite UT when the governor vetoed a funding bill.

Brackenridge provided funding to support women interested in studying medicine, architecture and the law, established a school for Mexican-American children in San Antonio, and donated 216 acres and financial support to Guadalupe College, a school for blacks in Seguin, Texas. He also donated land in San Antonio that became a golf course, and of course, deeded the 500-acre Brackenridge Tract to UT in 1910.

In 1924, the Lions Club leased land from UT to build Lions Municipal on the Brackenridge Tract. It was the city's first public course, opening as a nine-hole, then growing to 18 holes.

The Lions Club transferred the lease to the city in 1936, and for many years it also served as UT's home course.

Brackenridge was pro-Union in a Confederate state, and his sympathies forced him to flee Texas during the Civil War. When he returned, he garnered respect with his unusually generous philanthropy. Ken Tiemann, a "Save Mundy" leader, argues that Brackenridge's extensive donations to minorities and women left a telling legacy – that "he'd recognize the value of a civil-rights site and what that could mean to the University of Texas."



Brackenridge Park Golf Course
in San Antonio, Texas



George Washington Brackenridge



Lions Municipal Golf Course

Let Them Play - How Civil Disobedience Changed a Course's History

The desegregation of Lions Municipal Golf Course preceded many other milestones in the history of civil rights in America. Shortly after *Sweatt v. Painter* desegregated the University of Texas Law School in 1950, Muny became the first municipal golf course in the southern United States to desegregate. Archival records and oral histories have identified this as among the first instances of racial integration of public accommodations non-violently and without court order in the states of the old Confederacy. In late 1950, two black youths played a round of golf at the course. Alvin Propps (1941 – 2010), was only nine years old when he unknowingly became part of civil rights history.

Propps, a nine-year-old caddie at Muny, and another black youth, were detained in late 1950 for playing the course in defiance of Jim Crow laws. Taylor Glass, the Mayor of Austin at that time, quickly conferred with members of the city council, and a decision was made not to prosecute Propps or his companion. According to interviews with former caddies, the course regularly attracted black golfers from the region and across Texas.

Later, in 1951, Austin desegregated its public library, and a fire station on Lydia Street in Austin was integrated in 1952. Notably, all of this occurred well before the groundbreaking 1954 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which mandated that schools and other public facilities be racially integrated.”

(Source: The Cultural Landscape Foundation)

In 1951, prompted by a suggestion to construct an East Austin course for black golfers, Councilwoman Emma Long recommended that they be permitted to play on all municipal courses, effectively ratifying Muny's desegregation. Other jurisdictions including Miami, Houston, Beaumont, Atlanta and Nashville routinely fought desegregation of public accommodations even after *Brown*, further evidence that Austin's dearth of legal battles against integration was unusual.



Councilwoman Emma Long

Heman Sweatt, registering for courses at the University of Texas law school, Austin, 1950. Sweatt won admission to the University of Texas law school as a result of *Sweatt v. Painter*, United States Supreme Court.

1974 Taylor Glass Interview



"I remember one day I got a call from City Hall wanting to know-there were two colored boys playing golf on the golf course. This was before there was any mixing of races in restaurants, schools, or anywhere was going on. So I said, "Well, I'll be right up there."

I called Bill Drake before I left my office, didn't tell him what it was 'till I got up there. He said, "Well, what is it?" I said, "Well... that old golf course is pretty big open space out there and I don't see why it ought to bother anybody out there and I'm for leaving them alone and not

even calling the newspaper and see what happens." And he said, "I'm with you."

I had to call one other member of the council to see that we had a majority and I called Mr. Johnson. I knew Mr. Johnson was just like us and we told him how we felt. He said, "It's the wisest thing you have ever done. Don't call that press either."

So we went on and let them play and never heard a word."

Interview by Joe O'Neal, May 23, 1973, Austin History Center

Lions Municipal Golf Course, 1939

A Course of History - Why Muny Earned a Place on the National Register

Excerpts from “Fight for History” by Martin Kaufmann / Golfweek, April, 2016 Backers of Lions Municipal believe the ‘Muny’ is worth saving

One day in late 1950 or early 1951, William Bacon finished caddying at Lions Municipal Golf Course, collected his fee – 85 cents for 18 holes back then – and started walking to his home in Clarksville, a black enclave near the course.

Bacon took a shortcut through the woods by the 18th hole and noticed something unusual: two young black boys – a caddie named Alvin Propps, and the other whose name has been lost to history – were hitting their tee shots on 18. At the segregated course, that was a sight never before seen during regular playing hours.

Bacon, a doctor now retired and living in Florida, recalled a friend saying “that Roy Kizer was going to catch it.” Kizer was the Lions superintendent from 1937 to 1973, living in a small house on property; a city course since has been named in his honor.

Bacon, then only 10 or 11 years old, was too young to appreciate the magnitude of that day’s events. Sometimes on rainy days when play was light or on nights when the moon was bright, some of the young black children from Clarksville would slip across Exposition Boulevard to play a few holes.

So when Bacon saw Propps playing in broad daylight, “We didn’t think it was that big a deal.”

That round by Propps, then only 9 years old, was a big deal then, and it’s still a big deal 65 years later. In defying Lions’ ban on blacks, Propps brought about the voluntary desegregation of the course, with the acquiescence of Mayor Taylor Glass and other city officials. General Marshall, Bacon’s fellow caddie and lifelong friend, recalls that it was a white city council member, Emma Long, who said, “Just let them play.”



Photo by Darren Carroll

“***To me it was such a sense of racial pride to see these guys drive up and be able to play golf,***”

General Marshall

but-equal doctrine of segregation established by the court in 1896.

Black golfers were accepted at Lions Municipal, but with reservations. A small, block clubhouse was built for black players, but Marshall said “African-Americans had too much pride to use it.”

News of Muny’s integration spread quickly. Marshall recalled the black doctors, lawyers and teachers, some coming from as far away as San Antonio or Houston, arriving at Muny “in their big cars and (with) their big golf bags,” dressed to the nines.

“To me it was such a sense of racial pride to see these guys drive up and be able to play golf,” said Marshall, who has been involved in the “Save Muny” campaign since the early 1970s.

And so they did. Lions Municipal is believed to be the first municipal course in the South to voluntarily desegregate, coming four years before the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Propps played at Lions less than a year after a U.S. Supreme Court decision that rocked Austin and UT. In *Sweatt v. Painter*, a UT law-school applicant successfully challenged the separate-

Marshall, 80, who still shoots in the 70s, believes Muny’s significance extended far beyond golf, serving as a catalyst to integrate swimming pools, libraries and other public facilities in Austin.

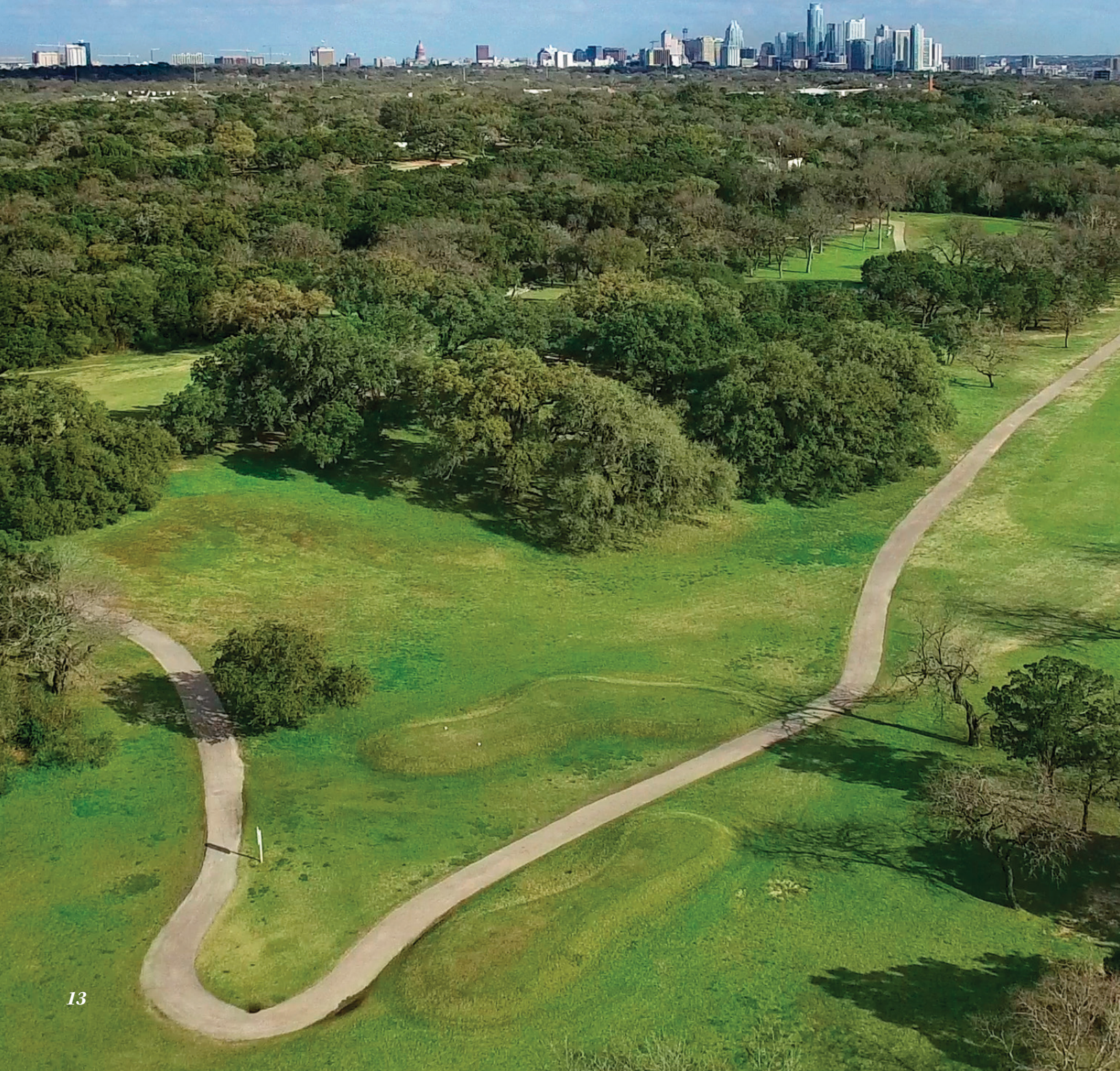
“There was this one course that opened its doors,” he said, ***“and it led other facilities to open in the city.”***

“

People talk about the worth of this course; it's incalculable. Not only in its acres, but what it has meant to people and what it can mean in the future.

Ben Crenshaw

”



Joe Louis

Legendary heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis was one of the most influential amateur golfers in American history.

Shortly after Mundy was desegregated, heavyweight boxing legend Joe Louis, who publicly opposed Jim Crow laws and became an ambassador to the game of golf and fierce crusader for the rights of African-American golfers, played the course in 1951 and again in July of 1953, shooting near par in 1953.

Louis became the first person of color to compete in a PGA-sanctioned event in 1952. The New York Times reported on Jan. 16, 1952, that ***Louis said that he would continue his fight “to eliminate racial prejudice from golf, the last sport in which it now exists.***



“
This is the last major sport in America in which Negroes are barred,

Louis told the Los Angeles Sentinel.

”



Color stills taken from footage shot by Robert Pugh at Lions Municipal in 1953



As a course open to black golfers Muny became a magnet for such golfers in both the Austin area and the region. National figures played as well. Both in 1951 and in late July of 1953, Joe Louis, the former heavyweight champion, and national icon for the symbolic blow he delivered against German racism by knocking out Max Schmeling, played Muny while in Austin. These rounds played by Joe Louis at Muny are important for at least two reasons. First, the course was available for Joe Louis to play at a time when he would have had extremely limited access to play on any course in the South, let alone a municipal course. Second, and perhaps most importantly, it is hard to view Joe Louis's rounds at Muny as anything other than a consecration of the fact that the course was available to play for blacks. Louis had fought hard to bring the game of golf to African Americans in the post war period. He did this not only by fighting for black participation in professional golf tournaments such as in San Diego (in which Louis played) and Phoenix. He also used his celebrity to serve as golf's Ambassador to the African American community. In doing so he would have tried in the North to open up more access to play for

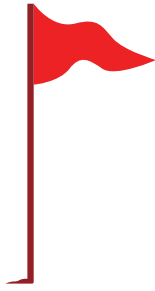
a small but expanding black middle class in the post war era. And in the South he would have fought for a poorer African American population that may have had access only through caddying. Dr. Bacon indicates that Joe Louis played the course twice. He saw Joe Louis play at Muny shortly after the course was desegregated and before he went to college in September of 1952. Louis played the course with Ted Rhodes, the great African American professional golfer who tried to break into the PGA and who taught Joe Louis to play. Joe Delancey, who played on the "black circuit" (United Golf Association sanctioned events), also played with Louis and Rhodes. Dr. Bacon believes this round was played in 1951. Interview with Bacon by Ozer (October 30, 2015). This would mean that the round that Louis played in 1953 was his second at Muny. Joe Louis became something of a "black golf ambassador" attracting black celebrities to the game, increasing its visibility among blacks, and fighting racially exclusionary practices by the white golf establishment.

Excerpt taken from the National Register of Historic Places nomination.



Right to Left: Joe Louis, Teddy Rhodes and Bill Spiller

Muny History Timeline



1910

Col. George Washington Brackenridge donates 503 acres of riverfront land to the University of Texas (UT).

1924

Austin Lions Club negotiates lease with UT to use a portion of the tract as a municipal golf course.

Austin Lions Club designs, constructs, and opens Austin Municipal Golf Course (Muny).



1936

Austin Lions Club transfers lease donates improvements to the City of Austin.

A.W. Tillinghast consults on partial redesign and a modern irrigation system.

1937

Board of Regents approved transfer of golf course lease to City of Austin, and A.W. Tillinghast's improvements are made with help of WPA labor

1950

June 5, 1950: *Sweatt v. Painter*; U.S. Supreme Court rules that separate facilities provided to Herman Sweatt at the University of Texas Law School did not provide him education opportunities equal to those of white students.

In Late 1950 Alvin Propps Desegregates Muny Austin Statesman article from 3/12/51 states African Americans have been playing golf at Muny for "several months".

This acceptance of African American golfers would not happen at another municipal course in the South for several years.

1951

April 1951 Austin City Council Publicly Acknowledges Muny Desegregation. Council minutes, and newspaper coverage, document Emma Long's objection to a separate golf course for African Americans. She states they are already playing at Muny.

Boxing legend, Joe Louis, and African-American golfing-great, Teddy Rhodes, play Muny.



In December 1951, Austin Desegregates Libraries, specifically the Main Library and Carver Branch.

1952

August 1952 Austin Fire Department Integrates Fire Station #5

1953

Joe Louis filmed playing Muny on a return visit, and shooting near par, as reported locally by the Austin-American.

1954

May 17, 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education*. U.S. Supreme Court rules that state laws establishing racial segregation in public schools are unconstitutional.



May 24, 1954: Houston Integrates Municipal Courses. The Supreme Court denies review for *Beal v. Holcomb*, forcing Houston to abide by the District Court's decision to integrate their courses. Albeit by force, this marks the second golf course desegregation in the South.

1955

Holmes v. Atlanta U.S. Supreme Court decision prohibits restricting days races can play municipal courses.



1972

UT announces plans to break the lease that is scheduled to end in 1987. The "Save Muny" campaign is born.



1973

A new lease between UT and the City of Austin is approved to commence Dec. 1, 1973 and end the last day of March 1987. This lease states that "one of the primary considerations for the granting of the lease is "the construction, operation and maintenance of a first class golf course available to the students, faculty and staff of the University of Texas System as well as the public at large".

1975

Course design is altered by architect Leon Howard as part of a city-funded improvements project that is agreed to with the continuation of the long-term lease.

1987

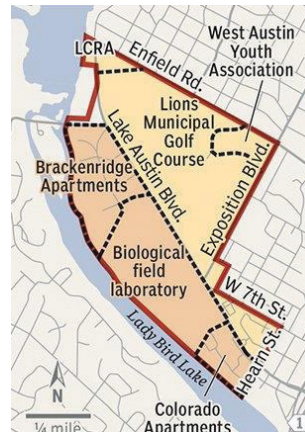
In December 1987 a 20 year lease for the golf course was signed. The Brackenridge Development Agreement (BDA) land use plan adopted in 1989 contains a provision that if the golf course lease is cancelled, the BDA is also cancelled.

2006

U. T. System Board of Regents' creates the Brackenridge Tract Task Force to review and identify facts and issues that impact use of the land, identify alternatives, and make recommendations concerning the Tract.

2007

The Brackenridge Tract Task Force Report recommends that a master plan be prepared to guide the development of the entire tract by leasing the tracts including the Golf Course and WAYA facility to meet "pressing financial needs of the University."



2008

The Board of Regents hires New York firm Cooper Robertson for \$4.9 million to develop a conceptual master plan to reimagine the Brackenridge Tract as a residential and commercial district

2009

Texas Historical Commission (THC) awards Muny a state subject marker.

2016

THC Board of Review approves National Register nomination and deems the history nationally significant.

National Register of Historic Places lists Muny based upon its civil rights significance.

National Trust for Historic Preservation lists Muny on America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.

2017

Preservation Texas lists Muny on Most Endangered Places.

SB 822 (fails): Relating to the transfer of certain property from The University of Texas System to the Parks and Wildlife Department.

2018

The Cultural Landscape Foundation names Lions Municipal Golf Course a threatened site.

2019

SB 2553 (passes): Relating to the creation of the Save Historic Muny District

Muny Conservancy formed as 501 (c) 3 to raise funds for 141 acre tract purchase.

2020

"Evening with the Masters" virtual Muny Conservancy fundraiser in October raises critical funds to continue the campaign to save Lions with viewers from more than 25 states tuning in to watch and donate.



2021 to Present

Negotiations concerning Muny's fate between UT and the City of Austin continue with input from The Muny Conservancy and the Save Historic Muny District Board.

“Muny’s past might yield new future, backers say”

Austin American Statesman 10.26.2008 / By Kevin Robbins

City records suggest that Lions allowed African Americans to play without limits as early as 1951, when two black youths were left undisturbed as they walked the public golf course - long before Oliver Brown petitioned the Topeka Board of Education and Rosa Parks refused to surrender her seat on a bus in Alabama.

Until the new information about Lions was found, the earliest documented full desegregation of a Southern municipal course occurred in winter 1955 after a lawsuit brought by black golfers in Atlanta reached the U.S. Supreme Court and forever integrated golf courses in that city.

Other Southern courses permitted African Americans to play for abbreviated periods or on certain days; black caddies, for instance, were allowed to play on days that some country clubs were closed.

But Bob Ozer, Ken Tiemann and General Marshall of Austin say oral histories and City Council minutes that they have assembled show Lions to be the first documented case of African Americans having unfettered access to city golf in a sport long seen as a stubborn bastion of exclusion.

“The city was forward. It was far ahead of other cities,” said Marshall, a lifelong resident of Austin.

A University of Miami scholar who researches the integration of golf courses has validated the evidence.

“It’s not one piece of evidence that one can single out,” said Marvin Dawkins, the Miami sociologist. “It’s the corroboration of the pieces of evidence.”

Dawkins was unaware of Lions until the sleuthing by the amateur researchers in Austin. They found an oral history on file at the Austin History Center recounted by Taylor Glass, mayor of Austin in 1951. In the transcript of the interview, Glass said he remembered getting a telephone call about two black youths playing golf at Lions in 1951.

“This was before there was any mixing of the races in restaurants, schools or anywhere,” Glass recalled in the interview, dated May 23, 1974.

“I don’t see why it ought to bother anybody out there, and I’m for leaving them alone

“The city was forward. It was far ahead of other cities,”

said Marshall, a lifelong resident of Austin.

and not even calling the newspaper and see what happens,” the oral history continues. “We went on and (let) them play and never heard a word.”

Until now, Austin’s city courses were thought to have been integrated in 1959. But longtime black players at Lions such as Marshall remembered seeing African Americans from other cities coming to Lions earlier than that year to play.

Marshall, a retired professor at Huston-Tillotson University, played his first round at Lions in the late 1950s, when he was a student at Morehouse College in Atlanta. But he caddied at Lions as a 10-year-old who walked in the late 1940s from his home in the Clarksville neighborhood to tote bags for 85 cents a round.

“There were a number of white caddies, too. But they could play,” Marshall recalled.

The research also included minutes of council meetings in January 1951, when the mayor suggested that the city build a nine-hole golf course in East Austin specifically for African Americans, a Jim Crow-influenced idea that was never realized. According to the minutes, Council Member Emma Long replied “that with other needs in east Austin, a golf course would be too expensive now, and that there were two golf courses already in existence.”

“I thought it was unnecessary and said so,” Long, now 96, said Wednesday.

Long said she remembers no controversy, deliberation or even awareness among council members that the city was formally

desegregating a golf course. Lions was already desegregated, Long said. The city saw no need for a law or proclamation, she said.

After Ozer and the others involved in the research found the evidence that Lions had been integrated long before they had thought, they contacted Dawkins, the Miami sociologist. Dawkins, who co-wrote a book published in 2000 called “African American Golfers During the Jim Crow Era,” reviewed the evidence.

He said last week that it “clearly established” that Lions was the first recorded municipal course in the South to allow black players to play without limitation.





Photo by Lorenzo De Paolis



Local community activist Mary Arnold taking questions from reporters in front of the new Texas Historical Marker in 2009. The University of Texas required that the historical markers be placed off the property and therefore are at the entrance on the city's land.

General Marshall with the Texas Historical Marker at dedication ceremony in 2009



“
Muny is everything to me

General Marshall

”



“
I am going to put up whatever reputation I have for saving this course

Ben Crenshaw, World Golf Hall of Famer and Two-time Masters Champion

”

National Register of Historic Places Nomination Statement of Significance:

Muny historians nominate the course for the National Register of Historic Places with the site being accepted into the register in 2016.

Lions Municipal Golf Course (known locally as “Muny”), was the first municipal golf course in Austin, Texas. Muny was established in 1924 by members of the Austin Lions Club who envisioned a modern, inclusive golf experience. The Lions Club association executed a lease with the University of Texas on May 31, 1924, for a portion of the Brackenridge Tract in West Austin. In 1936, they transferred the eighteen-hole course and clubhouse to the City of Austin. While Muny’s course layout has evolved alongside the game of golf, the property retains its historical integrity and character. The renowned American golf course architect A.W. Tillinghast consulted at Lions Municipal in 1936. Funding and labor from the Works Progress Administration program led to course improvements and new buildings in 1937-39. Many notable golfers have played at Muny including World Golf Hall of Famers Ben Hogan, Bryon Nelson, and Tom Kite. A fourth World Golf Hall of Fame member, Ben Crenshaw, credits the course as instrumental in his development. Lions Municipal Golf Course, then, is part of Austin’s golf legacy. Lions Municipal Golf Course is also part of a broader, national story of social and cultural developments around race relations. In late 1950 – following the Supreme Court’s decision in *Sweatt v. Painter* but well before *Brown v Board of Education* – Muny quietly became the first desegregated municipal golf course in the South (defined as the states of the old Confederacy). African Americans routinely played at Muny thereafter. In 1951 and again in July 1953, Joe Louis (former heavyweight-boxing champion and, at that time, golf’s ambassador to black America) played at Muny. The desegregation of Muny and then other



local facilities during 1950-54 occurred without conflict and with minimal public debate, in contrast to the hostile resistance of many communities in the South. Litigation arising from other southern cities demonstrated that (outside of the events in Austin) meaningful changes in the desegregation of city-owned golf courses would only happen after *Brown* was decided in 1954. The desegregation of Muny reflects progressive changes in the Jim Crow south before the advent of the post-*Brown* Civil Rights movement. For these reasons, the property is nominated to the National Register at the national level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Social History. The property is also nominated at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment and Recreation as a significant municipal golf course that offered the opportunity for many to experience the sport of golf without the club membership required at the Austin Country Club’s private course (now Hancock Golf Course, NRHP 2014). The period of significance is 1924-1966, reflecting the property’s continuous use as a golf course through the historic period.

Recognizable Significance Notable Support for Historical Preservation at Muny

National Trust for Historic Preservation: 11 Most Endangered Historic Places (2016)



National Trust for Historic Preservation
**America's 11 Most
Endangered Historic Places**

This annual list spotlights important examples of the nation's architectural and cultural heritage that are at risk of destruction or irreparable damage. More than 260 sites have been on the list over its 28-year history, and in that time, only a handful of listed sites have been lost.

"Now, despite being added to the National Register of Historic Places this past summer, Muny's future is uncertain. Muny's lease, currently held between the City of Austin and the University of Texas, technically expires in May of 2019, but previous public statements point to a possible dissolution of the agreement to make way for potential commercial development on the property. Muny's future hinges on a longer-term negotiated resolution between the City and the University."

"As the complex struggle for racial justice continues to take center stage across America, places like Austin's Lions Municipal Golf Course have much to teach us about peaceful efforts towards increased human decency and respect," said Stephanie Meeks, president and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "But Muny cannot continue to highlight an important side of the American story unless we take action to preserve it as a resource for its community."

National Register of Historic Places: Marker Dedication Day (2016)



The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.



Muny's unique legacy has been recognized by distinguished elected officials, historians as well as state and national organizations.

**The Cultural Landscape Foundation -
Landslide: Grounds for Democracy (2018)**



From the Press Release: Lions Municipal Golf Course, Austin, Texas. Known affectionately as "Muny," Lions Municipal Golf Course was built just two miles west of the State Capitol in Austin. Aside from its historic design, Muny is best known as the first desegregated municipal golf course in the South, thanks to the rebellious act of a young African American caddie in 1950. The University of Texas, Austin, which owns the land that Muny occupies and leases it to the City of Austin, decided in 2011 that it will not renew the lease beyond 2019, opting instead to destroy Muny to make way for a mixed-use development. "In the past the University has advanced the idea of preserving just the clubhouse and not the course itself. However, the clubhouse was the last part of the Muny site to desegregate, with city officials even building a separate clubhouse (no longer standing) for African Americans after the course was open to them. Prominent leaders of Austin's African American community, including Pastor Joseph Parker of the David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church and Nelson Linder, head of the local NAACP branch, have pushed back publicly against that idea."

**Preservation Texas: Texas' Most
Endangered Places (2017)**



"The 2017 Most Endangered Places list includes a range of historic places that merit the attention of Texans statewide. At the local level, grassroots organizations are working to save specific resources that, if lost, would diminish their communities. We believe that the protection of at-risk historic places large and small ensures that architectural, historic and cultural landmarks endure amidst an ever-changing landscape, enriching our quality of life."

**Texas Golf Hall of Fame: Registry of
Historic Golf Courses Class of 2017**



"Lions Municipal Golf Course is associated with distinguished golfers and is a respectable piece of golf course architecture. But, most importantly, the course impacted national history with respect to race relations in public recreational spaces as the first municipal golf course in the South to desegregate in late 1950."



Eddie Bernice Johnson

Representative, 30th District, Texas; Congressional Black Caucus

“Muny has made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history, particularly in the realm of race relations. While other cities litigated to preserve the segregated nature of their golf courses, Muny set the standard by extending golf to the African American community as one of the many privileges of American life that would follow.”



Joseph C. Parker

Senior Pastor, David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Austin, Texas

“Lions is part of the narrative of racial progress not only in Austin but in the nation. Preserving it almost elevates to a sacred recognition of what took place there. My hope continues to be that the University of Texas will respect the desires of those of us who want it to not be redeveloped. And now with the considered decision of the registry officials, it appears as if our position has been affirmed. It seems to me that some serious weight needs to be given to their decision.”



Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore

Peter V. and C. Vann Woodward Professor of History, Departments of History, African American Studies, and American Studies, Yale University

“Historians searching for the impetus of the ‘classical phase of the Civil Rights Movement,’ preceding *Brown v. Board* in 1954 and the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, have posited a ‘long civil rights movement’ that preceded those iconic struggles. In other words, Lions Municipal Golf Course is representative of the ‘birth of the civil rights movement.’”



Dr. Paul Stekler

Chair, Department of Radio-Television-Film, University of Texas at Austin

“Muny is an important part of our shared past in Austin, Texas and needs to be remembered, as both an historical moment in the long process to break racial segregation and as a living memorial, where people can learn about that history and still afford the same round of golf that those first African-American golfers enjoyed in 1950”



James E. Clyburn

Representative, 6th District, South Carolina; Assistant Democratic Leader; Congressional Black Caucus

“The action of African American citizens in Austin, Texas and the City Council in desegregating the course at such an early date is notable and recognition by the National Register should mark a teachable experience for the nation in our country’s civil rights history.”



Jacqueline Jones

Professor and former Chair, University of Texas at Austin Department of History; Ellen C. Temple Chair in Women’s History and Mastin Gentry White Professor of Southern History

“The National Register should embrace the site, not only for its obvious place in golf and civil rights history, but as an asset of immense historical and educational value. It is as much a piece of the American story—and potentially as powerful as a teachable experience—as the historic battlefields we protect and embrace.”



G.K. Butterfield

Representative, 1st District, North Carolina; Chair, Congressional Black Caucus (2015-2017)

“I support this nomination and urge you to list Munny in the Register as a nationally significant place that should be preserved for its civil rights history.”



United States Golf Association

“Based upon research conducted by the USGA Museum, as well as the work of scholars within the academic community, we believe that the historical significance of this municipal golf course warrants our firm endorsement. Specifically, this research suggests that Lions Municipal in late 1950 became the first course in the South to desegregate shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Sweatt v. Painter*”

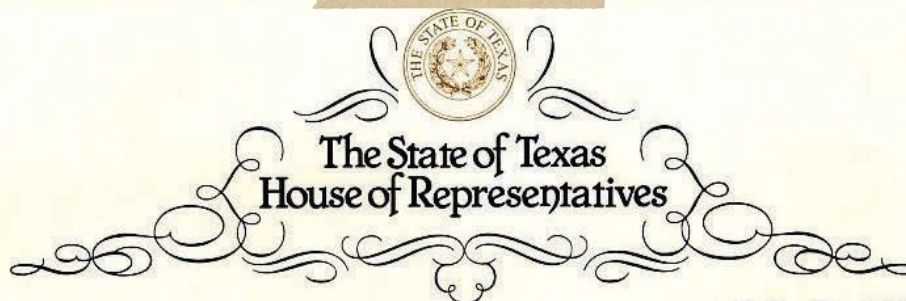


Sanford Levinson

W. St. John Garwood and W. St. John Garwood Jr. Centennial Chair in Law, University of Texas Law School; Professor of Government, University of Texas at Austin

“So many of the commemorations in recent years have involved shameful events, like the oppressive violence at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. It would be good to be reminded, whenever visiting the Municipal Golf Course for whatever reason (including, most importantly, to play golf), that it was the site for a nationally significant decision that we can truly be proud of.”

*Be It Proclaimed - Resolutions
Passed to Help Save Muny*



H.R. No. 1397

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Lions Municipal Golf Course in Austin has been awarded an official Texas Historical Marker by the Texas Historical Commission; and

WHEREAS, Known by its nickname, "Muny," the Lions Municipal Golf Course was created by the Austin Lions Club in 1924 on land on Enfield Road owned by The University of Texas; in 1936, the course's lease was transferred to the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, Throughout its first 27 years, Muny was a segregated golf course despite its proximity to Clarksville, which was then a predominantly African American neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, After the *Sweatt v. Painter* United States Supreme Court decision desegregated portions of The University of Texas in 1950, the Austin City Council, prodded by Councilmember Emma Long, desegregated the course in the spring of 1951, and Muny became the first desegregated municipal golf course in the South; and

WHEREAS, To commemorate this historic event, the Travis County Historical Commission applied for an official marker in 2008, and the effort drew broad support from such sponsors as Save Muny, Ebenezer Baptist Church, First Evangelical Free Church, First Baptist Church of Austin, Mt. Olive Baptist Church, St. James Episcopal Church, Congregation Beth Israel, Congregation Kol Halev, the Texas Civil Rights Project, Huston-Tillotson University, the Austin Black Lawyers Association, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, and the Austin chapter of the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, The approval of a historical marker for the Lions Municipal Golf Course provides a fitting opportunity to recall and celebrate the important role Muny played in the civil rights movement in the Capitol City; and

WHEREAS, Both the Austin City Council and the Travis County Commissioners Court unanimously passed resolutions supporting the application for a historical marker for Muny; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas Legislature hereby commemorate the approval of a Texas Historical Marker at Lions Municipal Golf Course in Austin and extend to all those involved in this worthy endeavor sincere congratulations for their hard work and success.

Naishtat

RESOLUTIONS & PROCLAMATIONS in support of Muny have been passed by: Travis County Commissioners Court (2008), Austin City Council (2009), Texas House of Representatives (2009), Lions Club of Downtown Austin (2015), Austin City Council (2016), Texas Golf Hall of Fame (2016), City of Austin Proclamation (2016), Preservation Austin (2016) City of Austin General Marshal Day Proclamation (2021).

“

*Its role as a local civil rights landmark
makes it an ideal candidate for
preservation and recognition.*

Representative Lloyd Doggett, 35th District, Texas

”



Austin American-Statesman

Sunday, February 7, 2016

Breaking news at statesman.com

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

MORE THAN A GOLF COURSE

BLACK LEADERS SEEK TO HAVE MUNY LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



ABOVE: Black workers help build Muny; the photo is from the collection of Tinsley Penick, son of legendary golf instructor Harvey Penick.

RIGHT: A film's screen capture shows heavyweight boxing legend Joe Louis golfing at Lions Municipal Golf Course.



TOP: A sign supporting Muny is posted at the driving range at Lions Municipal Golf Course.

By Ralph K.M. Haurwitz
rhaurwitz@statesman.com

Joseph C. Parker Jr. came of age in the 1960s in Birmingham, Ala., a time and place of civil rights turmoil. He saw smoke emanating from the 16th Street Baptist Church after a bombing that killed four children. His father was a friend and college schoolmate of Martin Luther King Jr.'s and marched with the civil rights leader.

Thus did Parker, who is a lawyer and the senior pastor of David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Austin, develop an appreciation of how local history figures into national history. And that, in turn, helps explain why he wants the University of Texas System to preserve Lions Municipal Golf Course instead of leasing the property for a major residential and commercial development.

"Lions is part of the narrative of racial progress not only in Austin but in the nation," Parker said. "Preserving it almost elevates to a sacred recognition of what took place there."

What took place at the course, also known

Muny continued on A8

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Muny historic designation gets Austin council support

Members unanimously support listing on the National Register.

By Mary Huber
mhuber@statesman.com

The Austin City Council has joined the chorus of community members calling for the Lions Municipal Golf Course to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The council's unanimous show of support Thursday came after Council Member Sheri Gallo described the "changes in hearts and minds" the course has represented since the 1950s, when two black golfers walked onto the West Austin course to play a round of golf. City officials then agreed to let them play, leading many to describe the course, nicknamed "Muny," as the first integrated golf course in the South.

Gallo also made a case for the course's future. "We are sending a very strong statement that we would like this property to remain as open green space," said Gallo, whose District 10 includes the course.

The city leases the 141-acre course from the University of Texas System, which has crafted plans to develop the course and the rest of the Brackenridge Tract into housing, shops and hotels. Several years ago, the university voted against renewing the city's lease on the golf course, which expires in May 2019. A mixed-use development could garner the university system \$5.5 million per year, as opposed to the few hundred thousand dollars in yearly rent it receives from the city of Austin.

The university has opposed the effort by Save Muny, an organization of golfers and

myStatesman

Read previous coverage of the Lions Municipal Golf Course with this story at mystatesman.com.

Tarrytown residents, to have the course listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a decision that ultimately will be determined by the National Park Service.

University-commissioned architects have stated there is little evidence to support the course's historic significance and point to modifications in the course layout over time. The university has suggested, instead, listing a portion of the course on the National Register.

At Thursday's council meeting, Council Member Don Zimmerman asked whether

Golf course continued on B5

AUSTIN ■ RECREATION

Muny's past might yield new future, backers say

Research suggests golf course was a leader in desegregation

By Kevin Robbins

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF



General Marshall says research shows Lions integrated in the early '50s.

A couple of months ago, a few friends with a fondness for Lions Municipal Golf Course casually began to explore whether Lions was the first municipal course in Texas to integrate the races. Layer after layer, the evidence revealed a far more stunning conclusion.

Lions could be the first verifiable desegregated municipal course south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

That research from the past could affect the future of the West Austin golf course, which is on land owned by the University of Texas System. UT regents are exploring new ways to use the property, which has spurred community efforts to try to preserve the 80-year-old

See **ROLE**, A10

NEW DETAILS MUNY

Muny joins 'most endangered' historic sites list

Golf course was site in 1950 of two golfers defying Jim Crow laws.

By Ralph K.M. Haurwitz
rhaurwitz@statesman.com

The National Trust for Historic Preservation named Lions Municipal Golf Course on Wednesday to its list of America's most endangered historic places, calling the course a "civil rights landmark" with an uncertain future.

The National Trust, a private, nonprofit organization based

in Washington, also included El Paso's Chihuahuita and El Segundo Barrio Neighborhoods on its annual list of 11 sites. The core of that city's cultural identity is threatened with demolition of homes and small businesses, the group said.

Lions Municipal, also known as Muny, is considered one of the earliest municipal golf courses in the former Confederate states to be desegregated, if not the first. At the recommendation of the Texas Historical Commission, the National Park Service added Muny to the National Register of

Historic Places in July. Situated along Lake Austin Boulevard in West Austin, Muny occupies land owned by the University of Texas and leased to the city of Austin.

A local group known as Save Muny, which has been active in efforts to preserve the course, says its research shows that two black youths walked onto the property in 1950 and began playing, in brazen disregard of Jim Crow laws. City officials decided to let them play anyway. Thus, the course became integrated quietly and peacefully, well before violent confrontations that character-

ized desegregation of many public accommodations elsewhere in the South.

"As the complex struggle for racial justice continues to take center stage across America, places like Austin's Lions Municipal Golf Course have much to teach us about peaceful efforts towards increased human decency and respect," Stephanie Meeks, president and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, said in a written statement. "But Muny cannot continue to high-

Muny continued on B4

SPORTS: C1
JASON DAY DOMINATES
FOR PLAYERS TROPHY



AUSTIN 06.01
WHY DO WE LOVE AUSTIN?
LET'S COUNT THE WAYS

METRO & STATE: B1
WEAR: WHY THE RUSH ON
TRANSPORTATION BONDS?

CONTINUING COVERAGE MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE

Activists: UT twists Munny history

Save Munny's leaders say university slights role of black golfers, aims to eventually redevelop course.

By Ralph K.M. Haurwitz
rhaurwitz@statesman.com

The golfers, environmentalists and West Austin residents who have mounted Lions Municipal Golf Course for the National Register of Historic Places are accusing the University of Texas and

to keep the vast majority of the course off the National Register so that it will be easier to lease the university-owned property for commercial and residential development.

"UT seems intent to develop the course," Save Munny leaders said in a letter last week to the National Park Service, which decides whether a property merits National Register listing. "However, that concealment of the

historical value as one of the first public accommodations, and certainly the first municipal golf course, in the South of the old Confederate state is despicable."

At least about the matter, UT System Chancellor Bill McKernan told the American Statesman. "We're not trying to rewrite history. History stands as the history. The facts are the facts."

also known as Munny, became quietly and peacefully integrated in the early 1950s, well before violent confrontations that characterized desegregation elsewhere in the South.

Munny, which is operated by the city of Austin on land leased from the UT System Board of Regents, features two 9-hole courses and a clubhouse that has come-ways and holes that have come-

Munny continued on B4

MORE THAN A GOLF COURSE

Munny

continued from A1

as Munny, was a quiet sort of desegregation, more likely in the latter part of 1950. City officials, upon learning that two black people had walked onto the course, decided to let them play even though that was illegal at the time.

Some scholars believe Munny was the first public golf course south of the Mason-Dixon Line to become integrated. A state advisory panel recommended last month that it be added to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination for a listing — ultimately up to the National Park Service — was put forward by Save Munny, a loosely organized group of golfers, environmental advocates and West Austinites



Lions Municipal Golf Course has a rich history. In the 1950s, Austin city officials decided to let two black youths play on the course even though that was illegal at the time. Save Munny wants the first African-American golf course south of the Mason-Dixon Line to become integrated. CREDIT: NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER

my Statesman

Explore a timeline of important events in the history of the Munny Municipal Golf Course with this story at mystatesman.com

But then for the UT System Board of Regents hasn't revealed to be a negotiated mood. The board voted in 2011 against renewing the city's lease for Munny when it expires in 2049. That vote wasn't surprising in light of a 2009 system constitutional plan that said the golf course and other portions of the university's 350-acre Brackenridge district with thousands of housing units as well as offices, shops, hotels, parks, trails and even a yoga pier.

Many people, including Save Munny, see that plan as too ambitious, and it has not detracted for the past few years. Meanwhile, the Save Munny group has been a vocal and active presence in the public community and dug up records at the Austin History Center to bring up its case. Sankoff Levinson, a UT law professor, wrote an report of a National Register listing. "The state of the civil rights movement) commemorations in recent years have involved shameful omissions. The aggressive violence at the public protest in 1950 is to be remembered. When police attacked demonstrators with billy clubs and tear gas as they were attempting to march to the Alabama state capital in Montgomery in 1965. In contrast, Little Rock, Miss. Munny was the site for a nationally significant decision that we can truly be proud of."

If UT bulldozed Munny, Levinson said in an interview, some people would argue that it is "normalizing the past, as a separate argument from UT is selling out the opportunity of ordinary people to play golf at a reasonable fee." Levinson said the latter argument more compelling than the former.

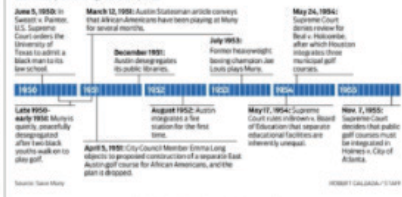
As far as Parks in contrast, preserving only some remnants of the course doesn't make sense. "The game was played on the course," the pastor said. "The game was played on the course."

During his time as Travis County's chief executive, Bin-cow said, he raised the question of whether the city and county might jointly come up with land to trade to UT in return for Munny. "Every time I raised that issue, it looked like it was readily rejected by the city and UT," he said.

Mayer Steve Adler, in a statement emailed to the Statesman, said, "Munny occupies a special place in Austin's heart and history and is one of those pieces of property that we cannot lose." Adler, however, that might be accomplished, he replied. "We don't yet know beyond knowing there's some tough negotiating ahead."

Munny's place in the civil rights movement

The desegregation of Lions Municipal Golf Course preceded many other important events in the history of civil rights in America.



History worth saving

Munny much more than a golf course, it's quintessential Austin — and UT legend Crenshaw has plan to preserve it.



portion of the course preserved as a national historic site.

"UT System and UT Austin officials are wary of seeming insensitive to Munny's civil rights history. After all, this is a public university that barred black students from the moment its doors opened in 1883 until the summer of 1950, when the U.S. Supreme Court ordered a black applicant admitted to the UT School of Law.

UT Austin President Gregory L. Pence has said the university is "extremely mindful" of its segregated past and is addressing that legacy in "meaningful ways." A statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis was removed from its prominent setting on the campus last year, although statues of Robert L. Lee and other Confederate leaders remain. UT is fighting for the second time in the U.S. Supreme Court to preserve its right to consider race in deciding whom to admit to its undergraduate ranks. The university is sponsoring lectures, a concert and other events this month to observe Black History Month.

Nelson Lindsey, president of the Austin branch of the NAACP, said UT would do well to preserve Munny given the university's consistently race-related concerns in recent years, including the

UT's Brackenridge tract



creation of the university's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement.

"People like me who appreciate history and culture think it's a big shame," Lindsey said of Munny. Tommy Wyatt, publisher and editor-in-chief of the Will-jager, a weekly newspaper focused on African-American issues, said Munny warrants listing and preservation because

NEW DETAILS LIONS MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE

Munny added to National Register of Historic Places

By Ralph K.M. Haurwitz
rhaurwitz@statesman.com

UT's Brackenridge tract

- Land used by UT
- Land leased



Lions Municipal Golf Course in Austin has been added to the National Register of Historic Places because of its place in the civil rights movement, a decision that could make it more difficult for the University of Texas System to realize long-standing plans to turn the property into a mixed-use development.

The decision, by the National Park Service, is a major victory for Save Munny, a group of golfers, environmentalists and West Austinites who banded together in support of the property's recreational and green space benefits. However, the listing does not necessarily prevent the redevelopment of the 141-acre property along Lake Austin Boulevard.

The UT System and UT-Austin

Munny continued on B4

ROBERT CALZADA / STAFF



'IT HELPS TO CONNECT THE DOTS IN THE PROGRESS OF RACE RELATIONS. TO NOT HAVE THAT DOT MEANS YOU HAVE A GAP IN THAT NATIONAL STORY.'

JOSEPH C. PARKER JR.
LAWYER AND MEMBER OF THE NAACP
MEMBER OF THE NAACP



'I CAN ALSO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF REVENUE TO HIGHER EDUCATION. NINE HOLES WOULD BE A GOOD COMPROMISE — THAT WOULD BE MY FALLBACK POSITION.'

SAM BESCOE
RETIRED TRAVIS COUNTY JUDGE



'I CERTAINLY WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME PORTION OF THE COURSE PRESERVED AS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.'

GENERAL MARSHALL
RETIRED HISTORY PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

“It would be a shame to bulldoze an amazing Central Texas historical find.”

Austin American Statesman Editorial Board

Muny in the News - Stories From the Fight to Save Muny

Save Muny; Save a Piece of History

October 27, 2008 | Austin American-Statesman (TX) Author: Austin American-Statesman Editorial | Page: A08 | Section: Editorial

Given recently uncovered history surrounding the Lions Municipal Golf Course in West Austin, the question no longer is whether to save Lions, but how?

It is now all but certain that the 80-year-old public golf course was the first municipal golf course below the Mason-Dixon line to be desegregated.

That history became widely known Sunday courtesy of the American-Statesman's Kevin Robbins, who reported on the amazing sequence of events that unraveled Lions' past.

The evidence is impressive. City records, newspaper accounts and eyewitness testimony now are being validated by historians, including a leading authority on the integration of golf courses.

"This discovery represents a need for a corrective" addition to the official history of the desegregation of American golf, said University of Miami professor Marvin Dawkins. Dawkins co-authored the book "African American Golfers During the Jim Crow Era."

The discovery comes as the Lions golf course faces an uncertain future.

The golf course sits on the Brackenridge tract owned by the University of Texas System. Its board of regents has hired Cooper, Roberson & Partners, a planning firm, to explore future uses for the land, including the golf course. Austin leases the course from the UT System, and that lease expires in 2019.

According to city records and other accounts, Lions allowed African Americans to play without limits as early as 1951, years before other southern U.S. cities did so.

Austin city officials did it quietly without making headlines when they permitted two black youths to continue playing

separate golf course in East Austin and pushed the council not to waste money on a redundancy.

Though the city did not build a separate golf course for blacks, it constructed a separate club house at Lions so white golfers did not have to shower with blacks. Minutes of a 1951 council meeting show that it approved \$2,999 for a "lounge" at Lions that newspaper accounts described as a "Negro lounge." It has since been torn down.

But it still lives in memories of Marshall, who said African American golfers never used the clubhouse that sat in the shadow of the grander clubhouse for whites. "It was a matter of pride," said Marshall, who began playing at Lions in the late 1950s.

Much of the credit for uncovering Lions' past goes to folks associated with Save Muny, a group mobilized to preserve the public golf course as the UT System develops the Brackenridge tract. They are seeking a historical designation for Lions and looking into whether it can be named a National Historic Landmark.

Meanwhile, the Austin City Council is committed to finding a way to acquire Lions, but the decision ultimately rests with the UT System Board of Regents. Matt Flores, a spokesman for the regents, told Robbins that the planning firm would consider the newly uncovered history of Lions as it weighs options.

That's good. It would be a shame to bulldoze an amazing Central Texas historical find.



on Lions in 1951. That action - or lack of action - opened the course to blacks from across Texas who came to play at Lions on weekends, said General Marshall, a retired Huston-Tillotson University professor. As a 10-year-old, Marshall caddied at Lions and watched black golfers from Houston and San Antonio play the course.

Add to that the common sense of former Austin City Council Member Emma Long, who balked at the expense of building a

Rewritten text for marker upsets Save Muny leaders

August 9, 2009 | Austin American-Statesman (TX)

Author: Ralph K.M. Haurwitz and Kevin Robbins | Page: A01 | Section: MAIN

Despite reservations from some of its officials, the Texas Historical Commission rewrote the text for a historical marker planned for Lions Municipal Golf Course at the urging of a member of the commission and a senior official of the University of Texas System, records obtained under the state Public Information Act show.

The result misconstrues the history of racial integration at the course, say leaders of a group seeking to preserve it from commercial and residential development by the UT System. Proponents of the rewording say it clarifies that history.

The marker is the latest flash point in a larger debate concerning the UT System's Brackenridge tract, a 350-acre parcel along the Colorado River in West Austin that includes the golf course. A consulting firm hired by the system's Board of Regents has recommended eliminating the golf course and downsizing or moving a biological field laboratory to make way for development that could earn substantial income for UT-Austin.

The marker, which is expected to be shipped early this week from a foundry in San Antonio, notes that some scholars consider the 85-year-old course, commonly known as Muny, the first verifiably desegregated public golf course in the South. Complaints by Earl Broussard Jr., a member of the Historical Commission who also heads a company that worked on development plans for the land, and Florence Mayne, the UT System's executive director of real estate, prompted the commission's staff to add text asserting that "at least one segregated event" followed the 1951 decision of city officials to allow blacks to play.

Leaders of the Save Muny group trying to preserve the course contend that there is

no proof that the event at issue - a private, invitational golf outing in 1963 - excluded African Americans. Moreover, they say, the rewording dilutes the significance of the day in 1951 when two black youths were quietly permitted to play golf at Lions.

The two youths, whose names are lost to history, inadvertently desegregated the course four years before a lawsuit in Atlanta led to the first formal integration of a municipal golf course in the South.

Until Save Muny produced its research - in the form of Austin City Council meeting minutes and oral histories - city courses in Atlanta were thought to have been the first desegregated municipal golf courses south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Save Muny used its evidence to seek a historical marker - an effort that drew resolutions of support from the City Council, the Travis County commissioners and the Texas House of Representatives.

Politics or history?

E-mails and other records obtained by Save Muny and the American-Statesman show that Historical Commission staff members were opposed to altering the marker text but decided to do so, as one top staff member put it, "in an effort to satisfy" Broussard and Sarita Hixon, another commissioner who had weighed in on the matter.

Ken Tiemann, a leader of Save Muny, said the influence of those two commissioners devalued the importance of the course's place in history.

"It's unfortunate that pressure from politically appointed commissioners seemed to supercede the opinions of professional historians," Tiemann said.

Broussard, Hixon and Mayne said in interviews that they sought only to ensure that the marker text was as accurate and complete as possible. Mark Wolfe, the commission's chief deputy executive director, said it made sense to include the reference to a segregated event because City Council minutes from 1963 show that council members discussed the exclusion of blacks from the tournament.

"That added even more depth to the story," Wolfe said in an interview. "If we can find a way to get it into the marker text, it helps people understand the site even better."

The existence of a marker wouldn't affect the UT System's legal authority to develop the golf course. Even so, the question of where it will be placed is in dispute.

The UT System, which, as landowner, gets to make the call, favors the right of way, although it has not decided precisely where along one of the streets bordering the golf course it would like to put the marker. The Historical Commission also prefers such a location for wide public exposure.

But the Save Muny group, as well as Travis County Judge Sam Biscoe, say the marker belongs next to the first tee, where golfers would be able to read the text. Biscoe questioned whether the university views the marker as "an encumbrance on its commercial interests in the land" - a suggestion that UT System officials reject. A final decision on the marker's location has not been made, said Anthony de Bruyn, a spokesman for the system.

Potential for conflict

Broussard's involvement in the wording of the marker has raised questions about a potential conflict of interest. One of 17

commissioners appointed to the historical agency by Gov. Rick Perry, Broussard is president of TBG Partners Inc., an Austin-based landscape architecture and planning firm hired to help prepare recommendations for the Brackenridge tract.

An assistant state attorney general, Joe Thrash, cautioned Broussard about his involvement in the marker's wording, e-mails show.

"Joe did contact me, and that's when I pulled back," Broussard said in an interview. "At all times I acknowledged that our firm was working on this project. There was never a question of whether there should be a plaque. My only issue was the verbiage and making sure it was accurate."

Broussard voted in favor of a marker for Muni when the matter came before the commission in January - with the wording, as is customary, to be left to the commission's staff based on research submitted by interested parties. State ethics law says an official with "a personal or private interest" in a decision pending before a board or commission "may not vote or otherwise participate in the decision."

"Looking back on it, it probably would have been better to just recuse myself," Broussard said.

In a May 6 e-mail, Wolfe noted that Broussard "isn't supposed to get involved," but Wolfe later suggested adding language about a segregated event "in an effort to satisfy" Broussard and Hixon.

That followed an e-mail from Bratten Thomason, director of the commission's history programs division, in which she said Hixon had suggested in a phone conversation that a reference to the event "might help quell Earl's (and UT's) objections." Thomason told her colleagues that doing so would not add "to the accuracy of the text or to the overall story we are trying to tell here."

Wolfe said in an interview that he didn't feel pressured by Broussard, Hixon or the UT System.

Hixon, who is chairwoman of the commission's history committee, said she didn't suggest any particular wording, only that the inscription be based on documented facts. She said she's comfortable with the final wording.

"I don't normally review every single one, but if there is a particular marker that has risen to a level of concern that I've been notified about, for political reasons or whatever, I like to be kept informed," she said. "But I do not give final approval on the markers. I don't get to vote. There is no vote. The staff has the final say."

Marker got special attention

In some ways, the evolution of the marker text followed a trajectory typical for the 13,000 state historical markers scattered across Texas. But officials said that this one has received more attention than most.

Barry Hutcheson, chairman of the Travis County Historical Commission, which backed Save Muni's application for a historical marker, recalled an April meeting attended by representatives of the UT System, Save Muni and the state Historical Commission - an "unusual" occurrence, he said, because marker text routinely is written by the state commission, without participation from anyone else.

"There seemed to be an effort to lessen the significance of the event by UT. I can tell you what I sensed," Hutcheson said. "They didn't seem to be interested in making this a recorded history site."

The Historical Commission's staff ultimately decided that the marker would refer to "at least one segregated event" without further elaboration.

According to City Council minutes from the 1963 meeting, "a group of colored citizens" was seeking to play in an upcoming Austin Golf Association

invitational tournament. Although the association had allowed blacks to play in an earlier open tournament, council members were advised that there wasn't enough room to accommodate blacks this time. The council voted to continue its policy of allowing private events, with the city not involved in collecting entrance fees or determining who is qualified to participate.

Save Muni leader Bob Ozer, an Austin lawyer, said that policy is essentially intact today, with various religious, ethnic and corporate groups holding private tournaments restricted to their members. What's more, he said, the evidence for concluding that a segregated event actually took place is inadequate.

"It's inadequate not only in terms of historical corroboration. It's inadequate in terms of legal corroboration," Ozer said.

Uncovering history

Bob Brinkman, the coordinator of the marker program, said Save Muni's research in support of its application for a marker was impressive: The group's findings included oral histories, City Council minutes from 1951, newspaper articles, photographs and even an analysis of case law about desegregation in Austin.

But the 1963 council minutes, which UT System officials found on the city's Web site, provided a new layer of understanding, Brinkman said.

"Even in '63," Brinkman continued, "it still wasn't full access. But you had your access, in one form or another. It still wasn't cut and dried."

Mayne, the UT System's director of real estate, agreed.

"Yes, it was a huge step forward, absolutely an important step forward," Mayne said of the 1951 decision. "And that's why we've always said it does need to be honored. But you don't honor something by not also recognizing the challenges that those African Americans still faced even then."

Ceremony honors Muny for 1951 groundbreaking integration

October 29, 2009 | Austin American-Statesman (TX)
Author: Kevin Robbins | Page: C04 | Section: SPORTS

With golfers playing in the background Wednesday morning, supporters of Lions Municipal Golf Course dedicated the controversial historical marker noting the 1951 racial integration of Lions as the first known desegregation of a municipal golf course in the South.

About 100 people assembled among the divots on the first tee to hear music and speeches commemorating the spring day in 1951 when Austin Mayor Taylor Glass tacitly allowed two young black men to finish a clandestine round of golf at Lions.

A citizens' group called Save Muny uncovered the event last year while researching the history of Lions, known colloquially as "Muny," in an effort to save it from possible future development.

"In the wide, open spaces of Muny, everybody gets to play," Save Muny member Mary Arnold told those gathered to see the Texas Historical Commission marker for the first time.

The black and silver marker was planted in a temporary hole on the tee, surrounded by potted plants and green Mylar balloons. The marker later will be moved to a right-of-way near a city street along the 85-year-old course in West Austin.

Speakers ranging from Travis County Judge Sam Biscoe to General Marshall, a former caddie at Lions, praised Glass and the city council members who did nothing when they learned the two black men were playing the formerly segregated Lions.

"The answer came back: Let them play," Marshall said.

Lions' distinction as verifiably the first desegregated municipal course in the South was confirmed by Marvin Dawkins, a University of Miami sociologist who studies golf course integration. Dawkins attended the ceremony Wednesday.

The discovery last summer accelerated claims from some quarters of the community that Lions should not be destroyed after 2019, when the city's lease with the University of Texas System expires. The system owns the Brackenridge Tract land that includes Lions.

"For me, this isn't just about golf, and it isn't just about the historical marker, It's about us really getting to know each other and really moving our city forward."

- Austin City Council member Sheryl Cole

A planning firm hired by the UT regents suggested earlier this year that the system should redevelop the course to make more money.

The city and county created resolutions supporting Save Muny's efforts for a historical marker. The UT System also got involved, influencing the language in the marker to imply the course was not fully desegregated after 1951.

"For me, this isn't just about golf, and it isn't just about the historical marker," said Austin City Council member Sheryl Cole. "It's about us really getting to know each other and really moving our city forward."

Carl Mica, director of business relations for the UT System, was the only representative from the system at the ceremony.

"This is a good thing," Mica said



Legislative Movement
Texas 85th Legislative Session's Senate Bill 822

During the 85th Texas Legislative session in 2017, a bipartisan bill that recognized Munny's historical significance and provided for the transfer of Munny to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to preserve it as a heritage site and golf course was introduced to secure Munny's future as a public green space. The bill, sponsored by Senator Craig Estes, passed the Senate with bipartisan support. It was sponsored by Rep. Lyle Larsson (among others) in the House but ultimately never made it out of committee to reach the floor for a vote.

Bills would accomplish what UT has not at Muny

May 2, 2017 | Austin American-Statesman (TX)

Author: Volma Overton Jr. | Page: A9 | Section: VIEWPOINTS

Recent commentary in this newspaper has suggested using Lions Municipal Golf Course as a Museum of Housing Segregation in Texas while developing the golf course itself. This is the wrong approach - and the university should be called out on it.

If there is an educational value to preserving Muny, it rests in some part on showing the history of racism at the University of Texas and how the legacy of that racism still exists in the way the university has advocated against preserving Muny and safeguarding the history associated with it.

One of the most powerful examples of this racism is the cynicism through which UT has manipulated the legacy of George W. Brackenridge. They actually argue that he would want to destroy a nationally recognized civil rights landmark.

Brackenridge was a union supporter in the Civil War who was almost hanged in Jackson County for his sympathies. After the Civil War he had a Confederate armory demolished using the stones to build a school for blacks in San Antonio named after Frederick Douglas, the black abolitionist. Much of his philanthropy was directed at educational opportunity for the freedman, not at destroying civil rights landmarks. UT is besmirching his good name. But that is only the tip of the iceberg in how UT has responded to the community in their efforts to preserve Muny.

In fact, instead of embracing and celebrating Muny's civil rights triumph, UT fought us all along the way as we worked

to receive state and federal recognition of the course as a civil rights landmark. Behind the scenes, UT had changes made in the text of a state historical marker to dilute the importance of Muny's desegregation. They requested the delay of a hearing before the Texas Historical Commission that resulted in the expiration of the term of a prominent African-American preservationist who was the chair of the State Board of Review.

UT contested the nomination of Muny for listing in the National Register and seemed to diminish the role of blacks in desegregating the course. UT even questioned whether Alvin Propps had played the round he did despite it being witnessed by another African-American caddie who is now a retired orthopedic surgeon and former colonel in the military. In order to more easily develop Muny, UT fought against listing the course that was desegregated, and instead wanted to list the clubhouse that remained segregated.

These practices are a throwback to the way UT benched black football players so the white guys could win their games.

It is a throwback to the segregationist legacy of George Littlefield, whose theories of racial supremacy still flow from a fountain on campus. Why don't we tear that fountain down and build the Museum of Housing Segregation there instead of destroying a civil rights landmark to do it at Muny? Now, we have legislation pending that would finally preserve Muny and give us the ability to properly honor its history. Once again UT is fighting it.



Muny's history doesn't belong in the back of the bus crowded inside a Jim Crow clubhouse, while condos sprout up all around so that the university can shroud the history. It should be out in the open, where all can see it and remember what it means.

I'm supporting Senate Bill 822 and House Bill 4059 because UT has refused to fully embrace all that Muny represents. It means freedom, equality and simple justice - things everyone should know and fight for, especially UT. And in contrast to the privately owned UT Golf Club, at least since 1951 everyone at Muny gets to play.

Just like the way UT fought Heman Sweatt's admission to law school, I see UT on the wrong side of history. The riches to be won from honoring history so far outweigh the marginal profits they seek. We give the university a lot, including a big chunk of the funding for its medical school. At the very least, UT should give Muny the respect and honor it deserves as an important symbol of our country's civil rights history.

Overton is a third-generation Austinite and a member of Save Muny.

House Oks bill to create Muny district in 2019



SAVE HISTORIC
MUNY DISTRICT

“The Save Historic Muny District was created by the 86th Texas Legislature as a mechanism for neighborhood participation in the long-term solution for Lions Municipal Golf Course (“Muny”). The primary charge of the District is to preserve 141-acres of green space in Central Austin that includes Muny, widely recognized as the first public golf course in the South to become voluntarily integrated and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2019, Senate Bill 2553 by former Austin Mayor and Texas State Senator Kirk Watson created this new District in an effort to solve the long-standing uncertainty surrounding the future of this significant Austin treasure. The University of Texas currently owns the land but has leased it to the City of Austin since 1936. The University had contemplated closing the golf course and leasing it to developers to create a mixed use development. However, the listing of Muny in the National Register of Historic Places in 2016 cast considerable doubt on that project.

Since then, the University of Texas, the City of Austin, and the Save Historic Muny District have been working together to determine the future of the property.

Many notable golfers have played at Muny including World Golf Hall of Famers Ben Hogan, Bryon Nelson, Tom Kite and Ben Crenshaw. Austin legend Ben Crenshaw, who credits his development as a golfer to his time on the course, has advocated tirelessly to save the Course for future generations. The District’s five-member governing board whose honor it is to serve as stewards of Muny was named by an appointing committee consisting of the Mayor of the City of Austin, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Texas Historical Commission, the Texas State Preservation Board, the Texas Nature Conservancy, Preservation Texas, and the Texas Golf Hall of Fame.” - www.savehistoricmunydistrict.org

Save Historic Muny District Board Members:
Mary Arnold, Brian Greig, Andrea McWilliams, Volma Overton III, Ken Tiemann



86TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE

House OKs bill to create Muny district

Measure would provide tool to preserve West Austin golf course

By Ralph K.M. Haurwitz
rhaurwitz@statesman.com

Legislation to establish a special district in Austin with the goal of preserving Lions Municipal Golf Course — for golfing, parkland or a combination of the two — won final approval by the Texas House on Wednesday by a vote of 104-38.

The Senate is expected to go along with an amendment added by the House and forward the measure to Gov. Greg Abbott, who, in turn, is expected to sign it.

Senate Bill 2553 would create the Save Historic Muny District, consisting of the 141-acre course along Lake Austin Boulevard as well as Tarrytown, Old Enfield, Pemberton Heights and other West Austin neighborhoods.

The bill by itself does not preserve Muny but rather is a tool that could be used to help achieve that outcome, according to its author, Sen.

Kirk Watson, D-Austin. It was carried in the House by Rep. Donna Howard, also an Austin Democrat.

Under an amendment added on the House floor by Howard, the district would be dissolved by May 31, 2021, unless it has entered into an agreement with the University of Texas to purchase or otherwise preserve the land. UT owns the property occupied by the city-operated course.

The district would have no taxing authority but could impose fees on customers of the city utility system who live within the district if voters in the district authorize such fees.

Such revenue could be used to help underwrite the cost of purchasing or preserving Muny. The district also would be permitted to receive philanthropic donations for that purpose.

Mary Arnold, a leader of the group Save Muny, said Wednesday she is disappointed that, even with Howard’s amendment, the bill does not ensure preservation of the land as a golf course and

guard against development by UT.

Bob Ozer, another Save Muny leader, agreed: “A new district with the authority to collect funds from its residents, and the presumed power to strip the historical integrity from the site, was never something the community has supported or supports now.”

Muny is considered the first public golf course in the South to become integrated, and for that reason and others is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The city leases the property from UT for about \$200,000 a year. The university has offered to sell it to the city for \$110 million, which the school has described as a “reasonable value,” as opposed to the parcel’s higher market value. The Travis Central Appraisal District lists the 2015 value, the most recent available, of Muny and a 15-acre adjoining property leased to the West Austin Youth Association at \$205 million.

The proposed district would be governed by a five-member

board of directors. The initial board would be appointed by a seven-member panel consisting of the mayor of Austin, the Texas director of the Nature Conservancy and the executive directors of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Texas Historical Commission, the Texas State Preservation Board, Preservation Texas and the Texas Golf Hall of Fame.

Future directors of the district would be appointed by the City Council from a list of names recommended by the preceding board.

Muny is appreciated not only by golfers but also by many Tarrytown residents who prefer green space next to their tony neighborhood over the dense, mixed-use subdivision once contemplated by UT’s governing board.

The course is part of the 350-acre Brackenridge Tract, whose other leased parcels include a grocery store, restaurants, a marina, shops, an apartment complex and the Lower Colorado River Authority’s headquarters. Lease payments benefit the university. Other portions of

the tract are occupied by UT’s biological field laboratory and student apartments.

UT and the city of Austin have been engaged in off-and-on discussions for many months on the future of Muny and the rest of the Brackenridge Tract, with no resolution.

“I remain committed to acquiring Muny,” said Council Member Alison Alter, whose district includes the course and much of the West Austin neighborhoods that would be part of the Save Historic Muny District. “I welcome any tool that will help the city and the community to raise public or private dollars to that end.”

Paying \$110 million for Muny “would be a real stretch,” said Council Member Kathie Tovo, who represents the remaining portion of the proposed district. “One of the important provisions in the bill provides for the entity to accept philanthropic donations. That will probably be an important component of ensuring Muny’s continued operations. I’m strongly supportive of continuing it as a golf course.”

Today, Lions Municipal Golf Course is:

Since 1924, a beloved natural green space amid a developing city

Host for 60,000 rounds of golf each year, on average

An attraction for local and regional golfers, with fewer than 14% of players residing in the same zip code as Muny

A practice course for more than 12 Austin area middle and high school golf teams

A perennial location for University Interscholastic League tournaments, having hosted hundreds of schools from across Texas

Host to more tournaments and charity events than any of the city's other public golf courses

A civil rights historical site, recognized as the first racially integrated municipal golf course in the South

A local treasure in the legacy of Texas golf

A 141-acre wildlife sanctuary and water recharge zone

Home to protected heritage trees

Lions Municipal Golf Course in the near future could:

Remain the most popular and scenic public course in Austin

Enhance quality of life for all Austinites as an affordable recreation opportunity

Offer a world-class municipal course with restoration led by local golf legend and acclaimed course designer Ben Crenshaw

Honor Muny's early desegregation and nearly 100 years of golf history with museum quality displays thought the course and a learning center within the historic clubhouse

Have a new clubhouse with a public restaurant and event space

Be open to the public as a park on designated days

Enhance the value of future development projects on surrounding land

A bulldozed and developed Muny would mean:

The loss of the only 18-hole public golf course in central Austin

Demolition of priceless green space in an increasingly dense urban area

The permanent loss of a civil rights landmark and National Register of Historic Places site

The culling of hundreds of protected heritage trees

That taxpayer funds would be collected to support decades of construction work in central Austin

Thousands of additional vehicle trips in the areas around Muny in perpetuity

The end of a public place that has been part of Austin's fabric for more than half of the city's lifetime.

How We Keep Playing - A Plan for the future of Lions Municipal Golf Course

As the city's most beloved and affordable course, **Muny currently hosts around 60,000 rounds of golf each year**, stages more charity tournaments than any Austin course, serves as a practice facility for more than 12 middle and high school golf teams, and is known for the hundreds of heritage trees throughout the property. Lions is also the home of the Austin Junior Golf Academy where young players from all over the City and from every economic background come to learn golf and the social importance of the game from a staff of dedicated golf professionals and teachers.

The Save Muny Committee has been raising public awareness on the grassroots level since 1973. Now, as UT seeks a permanent use for these 141 acres, The Muny Conservancy is working to raise the necessary funds to purchase and renovate Lions Municipal Golf Course.

Land ownership will allow us to welcome even more Austinites. We'll host community events like farmer's markets and concerts, embrace the next generation with extra putting greens, lawn bowling, croquet and an expanded driving range, build a new clubhouse with a restaurant, and much more.



Why Golf now?

“For Many, the Pandemic Has Led to the ‘Discovery’ of Golf”

- New York Times, March 22, 2021

Even before the covid-19 pandemic, the game of golf was growing and poised for a renaissance fueled by millennials taking up the game, expanded youth programs, and communities reinvesting in their public courses. **Golf as a sport has a bright future with great potential to be a unifying community resource.** Now more than ever, it is crucial to celebrate our municipal courses and prioritize improvement of amenities and increased access to the green space they provide. Affordable golf is an important part of a city’s recreational fabric. It provides an opportunity for a broader set of community stakeholders to access a game that is good for the soul and good for health that can unite players across generations.

“Latest numbers show a massive uptick in play; U.S. golfers logged 20% more rounds in August 2020 than August 2019. The increase marks the fourth consecutive month with a year-over-year increase and underscores a trend: People are playing a lot of Golf.

Rounds in Texas were up 39%, rounds in Florida were up 37% and rounds in Arizona were up 31%, according to the NGF. Every state saw at least a 2% increase in rounds played.

(Golf.com/ National Golf Foundation)

Around a third of all golfers in the U.S. are now millennials. Younger golfers are proving the stereotype that golf is a sport for the older segments of the population wrong.

Between April 23 and May 5, 2021, the number of rounds sold online at public courses that were open was up 60% from the previous year.

Juniors (6-17) and young adults (18-34) make up about 35% of all on-course golfers.

Women’s presence in beginner and junior segments of golfers has grown as well. They are especially interested in off-course golf experiences, including golfing ranges, comprising upto 40% of all off-course golfers. *(Market Trends & Reports, March 2021)*





CONCEPTUAL RENDERINGS ONLY, DESIGNS NOT FINAL.

Existing Clubhouse

This event space and learning center will honor the historic desegregation of the course, the personalities that have walked the fairways of Lions, and Austin golf history.

Driving Range

We plan to expand the current range and add 20 new hitting and teaching bays.



CHECHESSEE CREEK CLUBHOUSE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

New Clubhouse

Future plans include a new entrance leading to a clubhouse with a restaurant and grill, an expanded pro shop, meeting and event spaces, and a tournament staging area.

Flexible Green Space

Renovations will create space for additional putting greens, croquet and lawn bowling, community events, and farmers markets.



Lions Municipal Golf Course
COORE & CRENSHAW
2020



Renovation Highlights

New Driving Range and Flexible Green Space, Renovated Existing Clubhouse, Trails to Hike and Bike Extension, Lawn Bowling, Croquet and Putting Greens, New Clubhouse, New Entrance

Award winning golf course architects, Bill Coore and two-time Masters Champion, Ben Crenshaw have developed more than 30 acclaimed golf courses around the world, including the Sandhills in Nebraska (#1 modern ranking) and Friars Head on Long Island (#3). Among their designs are affordable public courses including the Warren Course for The University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. The two esteemed designers have also led historic renovations on numerous classic golden age courses such as the Donald Ross gem Pinehurst #2, Tillinghast's Brook Hollow in Dallas and Maidstone on Long Island.

The firm of Coore & Crenshaw will donate their time to lead the renovation on Lions Municipal, and is an opportunity the city, state and university should embrace. A Coore & Crenshaw historic renovation of Munny would restore the pre-1974 routing (below) that originated from the architectural genius of B.F. Rowe as well as World Golf Hall of Famers A.W. Tillinghast and Harvey Penick.

An updated driving range, covered teaching bays, and new large putting and chipping greens will also be available to those who seek to learn and practice the game. The existing clubhouse will undergo renovation to provide new public gathering spaces as well as a museum to commemorate the civil rights history of Lions and Austin's extensive golf history. In the future, Coore & Crenshaw envision an entirely new clubhouse with an expanded pro shop, meeting rooms, a bar, and a restaurant as well as staging areas for golf tournaments and other public events. Other amenities will include additional parking and a walking trail connecting Enfield Road to the new clubhouse and Lake Austin Blvd. These new designs and updates would perpetuate Lions Municipal as a treasured resource where golfers and non-golfers alike congregate to enjoy one of Austin's most precious historic green spaces.

Golfers, green space advocates and civil rights leaders from all over the country are working actively to save Munny from a terrible fate. You may have a role in how the movement to save the 97-year-old course from development plays out. The results will say a lot about what we value as a society and will define our legacy for generations.

Where Golf Goes From Here

Municipal courses are the backbone of American golf. These are places built for the people. For over a century, publicly owned and operated courses have been the breeding ground for passionate players and lifelong lovers of the game.

“Munis” make up a significant amount of our nation’s golf landscape and they come in all shapes and sizes. Some are short scruffy and filled with quirk while others are big brawny and immaculately manicured. They have one unifying commonality — anyone can play them. What a beautiful ideal to uphold!

Municipal golf has seen both good times and bad in America. In most places they teeter in between. Some would have them shuttered, claiming that the land and money should be put to better use. However, there are also millions of people who are willing to fight for their ability to enjoy public golf.

The game means too much to too many for municipal facilities to become defunded. That doesn’t mean it will be easy to keep them open and improve their experiences, but this is America...it’s not supposed to be easy. Municipal golf only works when we demand that it does. Like most elements of our democracy, we must insist that our leaders listen, learn, and act if we are to preserve the benefits of public golf.

Municipal courses matter in so many ways and it’s up to those who use, need, and support them to help share that truth. That starts with putting some skin in the game and getting involved. Ask yourself, what can I do for my Muni?

Above everything else, golfers need to promote the benefits and beliefs that drive public golf. In unison, those who want these courses to thrive should proclaim their support and show their dedication to this cause. Sharing with the masses that municipal courses uphold an important promise that is fundamental to the future of the game: Golf is for everyone. A creed that should be proudly shared all across our country.

Jay Revell



How can you help?

Join the conversation. Donate. Get involved. And help spread the word that we must save Muny, for good! For the latest information on how to help the Save Muny effort through the Muny Conservancy, sign up for email updates at savemuny.com and follow us on social media.

The Muny Conservancy is a 501c-3 and funds are currently being raised from individuals and foundations to secure the future purchase of the course from the University of Texas, and to fund renovations and the addition of public amenities to the property. For giving opportunities, donations can be made online or mailed to The Muny Conservancy at 1800 Nueces St.; Austin, Tx. 78701. For a personal philanthropy discussion you can call Scott Sayers at 512-478-3483. Conservancy Board members are also available for in person meetings and tours of the property.

Your contributions both small and large also make it possible for the Muny Conservancy to support long term oak preservation, scholarships for the Austin Junior Golf Academy and other urgent course needs.



Photo by Ralph Barrera

Remembering General Marshall

General Marshall passed away on June 22nd, 2020. He was a longtime advocate for the preservation of Lions Municipal Golf Course. General was essential in bringing to light how “Muny” furthered the racial integration of public facilities in Austin (and beyond) as the first desegregated public course in the southern United States. Because, in fact, he lived it.

Marshall was born in Austin, Texas on February 27, 1936. He grew up in Clarksville. From the age of ten, he worked as a Lions caddy during 1946-1952. He was paid 85¢ to carry a bag for eighteen holes (or 50¢ for nine holes) and often earned double carrying two bags. He personally saw the integration of Lions during 1950, after which he recalled: “there were several groups of African Americans who came to play Muny. I remember specifically that some had big bags and took caddies. I felt especially proud. They came from San Antonio, Dallas, and Houston.” General played his first round at Muny in 1952.

General Marshall graduated from Old Anderson High School in 1953 and was awarded a four-year scholarship at Morehouse College in Atlanta. After graduating with honors in 1957, he taught high school for nine years in Statesboro, Georgia, where General and his family helped to integrate the public school that his children attended, as well as theaters, restaurants, and local golf courses. After returning to Austin in 1966, he earned a master’s degree in mathematics from the University of Texas and started teaching at Huston-Tillotson College. On leave from Huston-Tillotson during 1974-76, General earned a doctorate in mathematics at the University of Houston. General returned to Huston-Tillotson and retired in 2001 as a full professor. He was a member of Ebenezer Baptist Church. He coached the Huston-Tillotson golf team from 1971-1981. He was a three-time winner of the Austin Senior Amateur Championship and was President of the Capital City Golf Association. General was recognized by the University of Texas Division of Diversity and Community Engagement for his contributions to the city of Austin and also honored by youth development organization First Tee in 2018 for his representation of its core value of responsibility.

Marshall was a fierce supporter and spokesperson for the Save Muny initiative since the 1970s. He also had a love for photography and photographed many events and tournaments at Muny, where he continued to play until just a few years before his passing, still breaking 80 even at age 80. General will be dearly missed and fondly remembered by all who knew him, especially his fellow Save Muny members who will continue his fight to preserve the beloved course. The eighth hole at Lions Municipal Golf Course is named The General Marshall Hole. His life will be honored at Muny forever.

The City of Austin honored General Marshall with a Proclamation declaring his birthday, February 27, as General Marshall Day in 2021.



Save Muny. For good.



Tax ID: 84-2599950

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