



## 2017 KPGA DEACON PALMER AWARD NOMINATION

**Name of Nominee:** Eric C.C. Gilliland  
**Facility Name:** Audubon Country Club  
**Facility Address:** 3265 Robin Road, Louisville, KY 40213  
**Facility Phone Number:** 502.637.5625  
**Nominee E-mail Address:** [golfshop@auduboncc.org](mailto:golfshop@auduboncc.org)

1. Please describe the nominee's service and commitment for others and their success regardless of situation.

Ten years ago, at the age of 35, my family and I received the stunning diagnosis that I had colon cancer. I had very mild symptoms, but fortunately, my general practitioner sent me for a colonoscopy as a precaution. Within 24 hours of the colonoscopy, I was in emergency surgery having a colon resection performed. Amazingly, the surgeon was an avid golfer and understood the lifestyle requirements of my profession. He performed a successful, aggressive procedure which removed the cancer and allowed me to continue life as a green grass PGA Professional.

Although I have always made an effort to contribute to the Section and the local community, escaping cancer was a redefining moment in my life. A close examination of how I was spending my time resulted in an acute focus on family priorities and opportunities to make a genuine impact in the community and in the Section.

2. Please describe the nominee's performance and service to the Association, fellow PGA Members, and the community to include contributions to building and growing the image of the PGA Professional, the Association and the game of golf while dealing with their own personal difficulty.

In my twenty-one years as a Kentucky Section PGA member I have served on countless committees and served three terms as a Director at Large. I am currently working closely with Lindsay Williams, Darrell Crall, and Suzy Whaley on an organic pilot concept to connect PGA member and apprentice families. I am also very proud to have joined Steve McMillen and Erin Horn on the committee to hire Kim Shafer to her current role with the Kentucky Section PGA.

The Colon Cancer Prevention Project has provided a tremendous platform for me and my family to have an impact on our community and state.

*PGA Golf Day* – In four years of playing 100 holes for the CCCP and Kentucky Golf Foundation I have raised \$26,815. This year my daughter and I partnered with my assistant, Chris Wilson, to raise our highest total to date - \$10,915.

*Colon One Golf Scramble* – In 2015, I approached the CCCP about developing a golf event to raise funds and awareness for our cause. Next year will be our third event at Audubon Country Club. Net proceeds from the event will exceed \$30,000 after the 2017 event.

3. Please describe the nominee's significant impacts made on others and ability to inspire and encourage success and achievement in individuals regardless of the personal challenges they face.

I believe that what I have been able to accomplish, post-diagnosis, is a testament to early symptom recognition. The summer after my recovery from surgery, I made it a goal to compete in the Kentucky Open at Hurstbourne Country Club. Although I was only 115 pounds, I was able to battle through the heat and tough course conditions to complete the championship. That was a special achievement for me and my family as my father-in-law was on the bag to see me through. The support and encouragement I received from fellow PGA Professionals was awesome.

Every year that I remain cancer free is a blessing that I don't intend to waste. I am now an assistant golf coach at Presentation Academy, working to get more young women into the game of golf. I will continue to compete at the Section level as my schedule allows. I hope to expand the number of donors and participants in my PGA Golf Day and Colon One initiatives. I hope that in a small way, my assistants and fellow professionals feel similarly compelled to give back through their interactions with me.

4. Please describe how the nominee has had significant influence on Golf Professionals, facilities, and employers in the effort to assist others and better the community.

I take great pride in the frequent opportunities I am given to counsel fellow PGA members, general managers, and operators from other facilities. I believe my longevity at my current facility combined with the number of former assistant professionals running local golf operations speaks to integrity of our operation. I am always eager to share best practices with other facilities as we are all faced with similar challenges.

5. Please provide any additional information regarding the nominee and his/her contributions relevant to The Deacon Palmer Award.
6. Please list any Section or National awards the nominee has received.

2016 Kentucky PGA – Deacon Palmer Award (National Finalist)  
2014 Kentucky PGA – Merchandiser of the Year, Private  
2013 Kentucky PGA – Merchandiser of the Year, Private  
2010 Kentucky PGA – Bill Strausbaugh Award  
2008 Kentucky PGA – Horton Smith Award  
2005 Kentucky PGA – Bill Strausbaugh Award  
2004 Kentucky PGA – Golf Professional of the Year  
2002 Kentucky PGA – Merchandiser of the Year (National Finalist)