

# HILL OF FAME

by

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**T**HE desire to memorialize his heroes is a worthy trait that had its beginning with primitive man. In its earliest manifestations, heroes became gods or guiding spirits, their influence and importance increasing with the passing of time.

As human culture advanced, this longing was expressed in various types of architectural memorials, as statues of stone and bronze, and as temples and cathedrals. The tree, singly or in groves, was highly esteemed as an appropriate memorial.

## *Development of Heroes*

With the passing of time, man's varied interests in life led to the development of heroes in the particular field which most interested him. One of the first and most dominating of human instincts was self preservation, self defense, or its corollary, the making of war.

Thus it was that among his first heroes was the athlete-soldier. Some of the most thrilling pages in history are those which record the battles in the 5th century B.C. between the greatly outnumbered Greeks defending their homeland from the invading hordes of Persians. In these, Greek athletes performed almost incredible feats of heroism and skill.

When the vast Persian army landed on Greek soil the defending Athenian General, Miltiades, ordered an obscure peasant, a long distance runner, to hasten to Sparta to plead for help. His name, now almost forgotten, was Pheidippides. The messenger reached Sparta, a distance of more than one hundred fifty miles over rough country, in less than 48 hours—a marvelous feat.

Eight days later when the historic battle at Marathon had been won, the tired Pheidippides was again dispatched to Athens

to announce the astounding victory. Over difficult roads he ran, never faltering until he reached the market place in Athens where he gasped out the eventful words "Rejoice; the victory is ours," then sank to the ground dead. Athens had been saved from Persian bondage.

Pheidippides covered the distance, 26 miles 385 yards, in less than 3 hours. Today, after more than 2500 years, this remarkable feat is memorialized in the great marathon race of the same distance which features the Olympic games. Thus, track and field athletics have their hero in Pheidippides.

With its more than 5,000 courses in the United States, golf has its uncounted thousands of devotees. American golfers with uncanny skill and fortitude have thrilled the whole world. Their feats are fast becoming legendary. In this spirit, it was decided at the Oak Hill Country Club, Rochester, N. Y. to honor the more outstanding of these heroes. Not only is the skillful player to be acclaimed, but also the notable citizen who contributes to human welfare in his chosen profession and finds time to espouse the recreational and character building worth of golf.

The long 13th hole of Oak Hill's East Course terminates near the clubhouse in a large natural amphitheater. It is bordered on the right or north side by a knoll about 150 yards long and by a similar but shorter knoll on the left or south side.

In the landscaping of the grounds they were planted with saplings, grown in Oak Hill's nursery from the acorns of oaks of world wide origin. These are now trees from 20 to 30 years of age and from 15 to 30 feet in height. From the right or north knoll, a view of much of the East Course may be had and the entire play on 4 holes

## A LIVING MEMORIAL



Ben Hogan, right center, looks at the oak tree dedicated to him at Oak Hill Country Club, Rochester, N. Y., during the 1956 Open Championship. Dr. John R. Williams, with microphone, presided at dedication ceremonies honoring golfing heroes whose names will be enshrined on the Hill of Fame. At the left is Congressman Jack Westland, of Everett, Wash., 1952 Amateur Champion, who acknowledged dedication of an oak to President Eisenhower who was unable to attend.

may be watched from tee to green.

The USGA Open Championship, which was held at Oak Hill in June, 1956, was the occasion for its dedication and formal naming as the Hill of Fame.

The first tree to be dedicated was a red oak deservedly honoring President Eisenhower. For obvious reasons the President could not be present, but was represented by his golfing friend, Congressman Jack Westland, of Everett, Wash., USGA Amateur Champion in 1952, who creditably and gracefully accepted for Mr. Eisenhower.

A bench with a bronze plaque bearing the President's name was placed beneath the tree. The identical honor was accorded Robert T. Jones, Jr., in whose honor the second tree was dedicated.

Three other notable golfers, Ben Hogan, Walter Hagen and Cary Middlecoff, were

likewise honored. The Board of Governors, on a later occasion, added the name of William C. Chapin, President of Oak Hill, for his outstanding services in the conduct of the 1956 Open Championship.

Each tree bears a bronze plaque appropriately inscribed. That of President Eisenhower reads:

Red Oak  
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER  
Soldier - Statesman - Golfer  
1956

A permanent committee, headed by President Chapin, has been appointed for the care and perpetuation of this memorial oak grove. In future years, as time and the occasion warrant, other golfing heroes will be elected to join the immortals on the Hill of Fame.