



Williams-Hoak honored by LPGA*USGA Girls Golf with 2018 Sandy LaBauve Spirit Award

'She is a tremendous leader and role model,' says LaBauve

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla., Jan. 24, 2018 – Debbie Williams-Hoak, Site Director and Lead Instructor for LPGA*USGA Girls Golf of Greater Washtenaw County (GWA) and the Detroit Michigan Women's Golf Association (MWGA), has been selected as the recipient of the 2018 Sandy LaBauve Spirit Award, the most coveted honor bestowed by LPGA*USGA Girls Golf.

Williams-Hoak, an LPGA Class A Teaching & Club Professional (T&CP) who is Director of the Brookside Golf Academy in Saline, Michigan, will be presented with her award on Thursday, January 25, during the T&CP Rolex Awards Reception at the PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando.

"When I was asked years ago to become part of the Michigan Women's Golf Association LPGA*USGA Girls Golf Program and drive an hour into Detroit to work with young girls, I am so glad that I said 'yes'. I loved it so much that I had to start a program close to home and it has become the most rewarding and fun activity that I do as a member of the LPGA Teaching Division," said Williams-Hoak.

"I learn so much from these girls and have so much excitement for their futures because of how special they are. I am so grateful to be able to teach and encourage young girls and to partner with the great game of golf and the LPGA*USGA Girls Golf program."

Named after the founder of LPGA*USGA Girls Golf, the Sandy LaBauve Spirit Award honors an individual who has gone above and beyond to inspire the lives of juniors through their passion and dedication to empowering girls through golf. Sandy LaBauve was an LPGA Teaching Professional in Phoenix, Arizona, and mother of two daughters when she founded Girls Golf in 1989.

"Debbie Williams-Hoak thrives on helping others on the golf course and in the community," said LaBauve. "She is a tremendous leader and role model. Her passion is contagious. I am honored that she chose LPGA*USGA Girls Golf as her vehicle to impact young women and inspire them to dream big, work hard but have loads of fun along the way."

Williams-Hoak was an all-star athlete in multiple sports. She was an all-American student athlete at the University of Michigan for basketball and track before taking up golf at the age of 31 in 1991. She qualified for three U.S. Olympic Track & Field Finals as a javelin thrower and narrowly missed out on making the U.S. team for the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

Williams-Hoak applies her extensive sport background with golf principles to teach and inspire athletes of all ages on and off the course, and her passion for the game has helped improve the quality of life for one particular young man who has cerebral palsy.

"She believed he could accomplish whatever he set his mind to," Tess Carichner wrote about her brother while recommending 'Coach Debbie' for the 2018 Sandy LaBauve Spirit Award. "Golf improved his balance and coordination. His physical strength and mental toughness increased as well. By his senior year, he had earned a varsity letter and became a golf captain. He attends the University of

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Michigan and studies Kinesiology. Girls Golf is fun, but it is also an active day outdoors. It is the type of fun that can translate into a lifetime of good health and high expectations for oneself.”

Williams-Hoak was recently named the 2017 Michigan High School Girls Golf Coach of the Year and is a nominee for the 2018 Michigan Golf Hall of Fame. As an active member of the community, she has touched the lives of thousands of families. Williams-Hoak founded "The Magic of Christmas" in 1996, a non-profit organization that provides Christmas gifts to children in Washtenaw County.

About the LPGA

The LPGA is the world’s leading professional golf organization for women. Founded in 1950 and headquartered in Daytona Beach, Fla., the association celebrates a diverse and storied membership with more than 2,300 members representing more than 30 countries. With a vision to inspire, empower, educate and entertain by showcasing the very best of women’s golf, LPGA Tour Professionals compete across the globe, while the Symetra Tour, the official development and qualifying tour of the LPGA, consistently produces a pipeline of talent ready for the world stage. Additionally, LPGA Teaching and Club Professionals directly impact the game through teaching, coaching and management.

The LPGA demonstrates its dedication to the development of the game through The LPGA Foundation. Since 1991, this charitable organization has been committed to empowering and supporting girls and women through developmental and humanitarian golf initiatives, such as LPGA*USGA Girls Golf.

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