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For Immediate Release

FORSTER LEADS LIST OF 2009 SECTION AWARD WINNERS

Each year the Section awards local PGA Professionals for their accomplishments in ten separate categories including the top honor of Golf Professional of the Year. All award winners will be honored at the 2010 Spring Meeting being held at Radnor Valley CC on Monday, March 29th.

The Section's top honor of Golf Professional of the Year for the 2009 season was awarded to George Forster of Radnor Valley Country Club. Forster has served as Radnor Valley Country Club's PGA Head Professional for the past 25 years. Throughout his career, while serving the membership at Radnor Valley, Forster has remained one of the Section's top tournament players locally and on the National stage. In 1999 Forster was awarded with the Section's Most Improved Player Award and in the same year captured the Section Championship crown. Forster also added two Senior Section Championship Titles in 2008 and 2009. Additionally, Forster has reigned as the Section's Robert "Skee" Riegel Senior Player of the Year for four consecutive years (2006-2009).

Elizabeth Granahan, PGA Director of Instruction at GolfTEC – Mainline, was awarded Teacher of the Year. A three time Teacher of the Year nominee, this is Granahan's first Section Award. Throughout her career, Granahan has had numerous articles published in PGA Magazine as well as various television appearances on Comcast Sports Net's Inside Golf show.

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In addition to her teaching accomplishments, Granahan is also a member of GolfTEC's National Education Committee where she contributes to the development of continuing education for all GolfTEC teaching professionals. Granahan has also served as a both a keynote and guest speaker at various teaching seminars.

The Horton Smith award recognizes continuing contributions to professional education. This year's Horton Smith award was given to John Rogers, PGA Director of Golf at Majestic Ridge GC. This is Rogers' fifth time winning the Horton Smith award. He previously took home the honor in 2002, 2004-2006.

Since 1997, Rogers has served the Philadelphia Section and the Central Counties Chapter as the chairperson of both Education Committees. From 2006-2007, Rogers also served as a member of the National PGA Education Committee. Within the Philadelphia Section, Rogers has served as a District Director, Chapter President, and as the Section's Director of Section Affairs.

For the first time since 2006, the Section saw a new award winner in the Junior Golf Leader category. Jim Wilkes, PGA Teaching Professional at Lower State Road Driving Range, will become the 15th recipient of the Junior Golf Leader award. However, Jim Wilkes is no stranger to Section awards. Wilkes was previously honored with the Philadelphia Assistants Organization's Arthur W. Brosius Award which recognizes both personal and career development.

Wilkes has been a junior golf instructor at various facilities within the Philadelphia Section as well as numerous outreach programs such as the Boys and Girls Club of Philadelphia and The First Tee Kids on the Hill Program. Wilkes has also served as a volunteer instructor for the girl's golf teams at both Mount St. Joseph Academy and Springside School.

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Harry Hammond, PGA Director of Golf at Penn Oaks Golf Club, was awarded with the Section's PGA Bill Strausbaugh award. The PGA Bill Strausbaugh award recognizes a professional who has distinguished themselves through mentoring their fellow professionals. This is the second time Hammond has taken home this honor as he was awarded in 2005 as well. Hammond has a list of Section honors, Golf Professional of the Year (1991), Junior Golf Leader (1992-1993, 1996, 1998) and Merchandiser of the Year (1986). Hammond is also a member of the Philadelphia Section Hall of Fame.

The President's Plaque will once again be returning to Chesapeake Bay GC and PGA General Manager Andy Barbin. The President's Plaque is presented to a professional for extraordinary contributions and achievements in Player Development. Barbin was also the President Plaque award winner in 2007.

Barbin has served the Philadelphia Section as a member of the Growth of the Game Committee and the Special Awards Committee. Barbin has also been a member of the PGA Presidents Council on Growth of the Game. Barbin has participated in various PGA of America growth of the game initiatives including Play Golf America Day, Get Golf Ready, and Women's Golf Month.

The 2009 recipient of The TaylorMade – Adidas Golf Assistant Professional of the Year award is Rob Agresti from Aronimink GC. As an Assistant Professional at Aronimink GC, Agresti works hands on with various aspects of the club's operations including caddie management, junior golf, outside services, teaching, tournament operations and merchandising. Prior to coming to the Philadelphia Section, Agresti was an Assistant Professional within the Western New York PGA. During his time there Agresti was awarded with the WNY PGA Assistant Professional of the Year award.

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Rounding out the professional award winners are three first time recipients. Simon Andres, PGA Head Professional at Hershey CC, Nick Wolfe, PGA Head Professional at Waynesborough CC and Robert Pfister, PGA Head Professional at The Golf Course at Glen Mills, will be honored as Merchandisers of the Year in the Resort, Private and Public Course categories respectively.

Each of these professionals has shown tremendous skill in developing and growing merchandising opportunities at each of their respective facilities. Likewise, these professionals have the ability to recognize their customer's wants and needs and the knowledge to maximize their customer's experience.

The Section awarded Bobby Acciardo with the Salesperson of the Year. This is Acciardo's second Salesperson of the year Award, having previously taken home the honor in 2006. Acciardo represents Titleist & Cobra Golf for the Philadelphia Section.

For more information on the Philadelphia Section PGA please visit our website, www.phillypga.com.

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