



Golfers support university as they play Trysting Tree

*"I love to wander on the pathway
Down to the Trysting Tree,
For there again I see in fancy,
Old friends dear to me."*

Named after the iconic gray poplar near Benton Hall, the one memorialized by Homer Maris '18 in Oregon State's alma mater, Trysting Tree Golf Club opened in 1988. Owned by the OSU Foundation and extending along the east side of the Willamette River, it's home to the Beaver golf program and a continuing source of philanthropic support for the university.

But mostly it's a regional gem of a public course, and it's being spruced up as its 30th birthday approaches.

"It is just a really good public facility available to any type of golfer who wants to enjoy the game," said Sean Arey '88, the course's golf professional for the past 26 years. "That's what the most valuable asset of Trysting Tree is — that it does cater to all levels of golfers. It can challenge the very best and it can provide an opportunity for the beginning golfer, who won't be intimidated by it."



Natale "Nat" Giustina in 1960

Giustina spoke at Trysting Tree Golf Club's 1988 dedication, at which OSU president John V. Byrne hit the first tee shot. (Photos courtesy OSU Special Collections & Archives)



The seed that would become the course was planted during the tenure of former university president A.L. Strand in 1951, when the university purchased 175 acres with the intent to build the course. However, it wasn't until Natale B. "Nat" Giustina, a 1941 OSU engineering graduate, joined the cause in the 1970s that the project began to gain momentum.

"Nat Giustina was the one who was a driving force behind the golf course," Arey said. "He had this vision of this golf course for this university and did everything to make it happen. He put the blueprint down for it to be a success and continue to stay a success — even in his passing, through his family."

A legendary OSU lumberman and philanthropist who died in 2005 at the age of 87, Nat Giustina provided the lead gift for the course and oversaw much of its construction. Designed by golf course architect Ted Robinson, it was built to provide an affordable, quality public course for the Corvallis area and to generate funds that would benefit Oregon State.

Nat's son, Larry Giustina '71, is chairman of the board that oversees the course.

Philanthropy has always been at the core of Trysting Tree's mission as an OSU Foundation affiliate. Profits from the course go back to the foundation to support various initiatives and programs at the university.

"To date we have given about \$4.5 million back to the school since Trysting Tree opened," Arey said.

Proceeds have supported OSU's turf-grass management program, the CH2M HILL Alumni Center, programs in agri-

cultural sciences, business, engineering, music, the Valley Library and several athletic programs.

"That was the idea of the founder," Arey said. Giustina carefully set up the course as a facility that not only would give golfers a beautiful place to play, but would truly be a gift that kept on giving to OSU.

As Trysting Tree nears its 30th birthday, and after nearly a decade of planning, the course is once again under construction. Oregon Department of Transportation changes in the right-of-way that borders the course have helped spur a remodel.

With donors' help, Trysting Tree acquired 26 acres off the 13th hole on the northern edge of the course to accommodate changes that should improve play. The project also will upgrade the facility's aging irrigation system.

Work began last September, and Arey — a former Beaver golfer — expects to open new 13th and 14th holes in June and then begin construction on the front nine, an extended driving range and a dedicated practice facility for the Beaver men's and women's golf teams.

"The best part is that it gives us a chance to refresh the golf course," Arey said. "It gives the golf course a new look.

"Seven holes will be different from the course golfers know today. That's like playing a new course again. It gives the course the chance to be ready for the next 30 years in business." 🍁

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