

Society of Hickory Golfers

2016 Board Candidates



The seven individuals listed below are standing for SoHG board positions to begin Jan. 1, 2017 and to run through Dec. 31, 2019. The official voting period will run from Nov. 15-Dec. 15, 2016. Ballots will be prepared and emailed to all SoHG members, so make sure your email address is up-to-date. Your email address is also your user ID for the SoHG website.

The candidates were asked to provide a brief introduction and a photograph.

Durel Billy **Seattle, Wash.**

Durel Billy is a transportation specialist who lives in Seattle, Wash. with his wife, Christina. They have a son and two daughters. He is in his 11th year as a part-time tournament director and golf instructor. Durel has directed over 90 tournaments to date, which include club championships, memorials, and junior events. He is president of Atlantic Pacific National Golf Club, also known as APNational, which has over 100 diverse members. Durel also serves on the executive board of the Washington State Golf Association and is involved with strategic planning committees for juniors and new members. He would like to encourage more juniors and ladies to become involved with the Society of Hickory Golfers and hickory golf through such tools as social media and concepts such as the National Hickory Golf Day, an idea that he formulated, and which he currently chairs.



Hugh Cameron **Corunna, Ont., Canada**

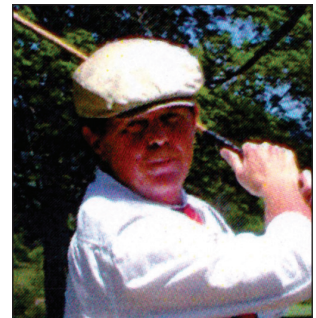
Hugh Cameron played competitive hockey until his early 30s. A defenseman, he suffered a broken bone or two, “and broke a few,” he says. He worked in Canada’s petro-chemical and power generating industry as a boilermaker and retired in 2014.

“In 1988 I went to college and received my funeral director’s license in 1990,” he says. “I worked in that profession until 1993 and then returned to the construction industry when I got an offer I couldn’t refuse.”

Hugh purchased his first set of golf clubs when he was 21 and played once a week.

“My first golf membership was when I was 26,” he says. “We played from the end of April to the middle of September. That was in Timmins, Ont. (about 300 miles or so northeast of Sault St. Marie, Mich.) where summer was usually on a Wednesday. I didn’t put much effort into golf until I reached 40. I purchased a canvas bag crammed with hickory shafted clubs in 1977 and they didn’t see daylight again until 2006 when I learned of the Society of Hickory Golfers. Now I play hickories exclusively.”

Hugh is a frequent competitor in SoHG events and is the 2016 senior gross Championship Series winner.



Ben Hollerbach **Brookhaven, Ga.**

Golf was a gift bestowed upon me at a rather young age. By the time I was five my father would often spend his weekends teaching my brother and I this great game. I grew up walking the fairways and learning about life one swing at a time. I played competitively through high school, but chose academics first in attending the Georgia Institute of Technology.

I've always been somewhat of a historian, looking toward the past to better understand the future. After quite a bit of reading by the game's greats, describing their style of play and why certain holes were designed in such a way, I picked up my first hickory-shafted club. I wanted to better understand how so many of these classic courses were still held in such high esteem and were so enjoyable to play a century after their creation. Soon after, I was hooked. Hickory enhanced my enjoyment of the game. Beginning with the 2011 Southern Hickory Fourball, I've become an avid traveling hickory player, following this game and the wonderful people who play it.

I feel very honored to be nominated for a place on the SoHG board and look forward to any opportunity to serve this wonderful organization. Following the 2012 season I was asked to take over calculations of the increasingly complicated Championship Series points and have acted in this role for the past four years. As a relative "youngster" in the hickory world, I hope to help carry the SoHG into its next chapter and beyond. Building on the foundation put in place over the past decade, I'd like to help expand the reach and visibility of hickory golf; to encourage the growth and activity of new and existing regional chapters that connect hickory players from the east to the west and the world across. There is a common bond found in every hickory player, regardless of ability or background. Deep down inside we've decided to take an inherently difficult game and make it just a bit harder, because we know that it's a better game this way.

Ben is a research engineer with the Georgia Tech Institute for Electronics and Nanotechnology. He and his fiancée, Hayley, plan to marry in April 2017.



Bob Platt **Lynchburg, Va.**

Bob Platt, a semi-retired financial advisor, works with his younger brother, Skip, in their family company of Platt Financial. He and wife, Berni, of 18 years, have three boys. They have just become grandparents with their first grandson (son, Lee Platt, in Colorado Springs, Co.). Other than golf and serving on several civic boards, Bob enjoys hunting, sporting clays, fishing, vacationing in Pinehurst, and family time. "Of course, beating my brothers for bragging rights is always a passion (this year, older brother, Bill, won rights!!)."

Bob credits Skip, one of the founders of the Virginia Hickory Golf Association (VaHGA), for getting him into hickory golf. It's the thrill of competitive golf that intrigues Bob the most. He plays in many local tournaments, always with hickories, but sometimes adding a modern driver to keep up with his steel-playing competitors. He believes if you love the game of golf, then the SoHG is the place to be.

"The net and gross scoring formats are unique and inviting for a wide range of players. You meet the greatest group of guys ever, and enjoy some of the best courses around," he says.

Bob has served on two USHO tournament committees. His passion is to introduce hickory golf to more fellow golfers and to assist the SoHG in reaching out to more players in more places.



Scott McAllister **Burlington, Vt.**

Scott is an attorney in Burlington, Vt., where he lives with his wife, Sandra, and his two children: son, Will, who shows some interest in the hickory game, and daughter, Kate, who was instrumental in putting together her high school golf team. He has been playing golf pretty seriously for 45 years. About eight years ago his love for the game began to wane in no small part because of Madison Avenue's incessant drive for more distance. He was introduced to the hickory game by good friend and long-time SoHG board member, Matt Dodds. Always a student of the history of the game, Scott thought hickories a perfect fit. "They brought the love of golf back," he says. Less than a year later the modern clubs have moved to a permanent spot in the basement. More importantly, however, hickory has introduced him to a number of people that he now considers very close friends.

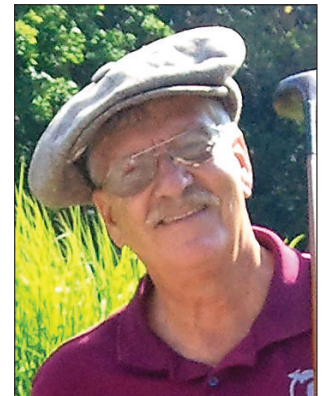
"I'd love to help increase international membership in the Society and opportunities for international play," he says. "Of particular interest is spreading the word about the hazards of falling into greenside bunkers while lining up putts."



Ed Ronco **Wyandotte, Mich.**

Ed Ronco is a retired educator and Michigan native. He and wife, Anne Crowley Ronco, have a son, Edward the IV, who lives in Seattle and works as a radio host on the Seattle NPR station KNXN (recently KPLU). Ed is the secretary and founding member of the WHO – Wyandotte Hickory Organization. He is currently the Region 5 Director for the Golf Collectors Society and Treasurer of the SoHG.

"If you love hickory golf and wish to spread the word, then we have a lot in common," he says. "I believe the SoHG has and should provide unique golf experiences for its members. I would love to see a hickory high school golf championship in the future. I'm Ed Ronco and I approved this message."



Michael Shiff **Parkland, Fla.**

Michael Shiff of Minneapolis was captain of his high school golf team for all three years. At the Univ. of Arizona he briefly flirted with a golf career, but returned home to take a degree in architecture from the University of Minnesota. He later opened his own architectural firm, Michael A. Shiff and Associates, which focused on the design and construction of county courthouses, libraries, parks, and recreational facilities. He and Sally married in 1983 and have one child, Samantha. Mike has two older children from a previous marriage and four grandchildren. Mike and Sally have lived in Parkland, Fla. for the past 33 years, some 20 of those spent breeding, raising, and showing quarter horses. They still feed five every morning. Sally got into golf about four years ago and the two enjoy golf and hickory golf as their traveling passion. Since 2003 Mike has won several club and state amateur championships. "We both have enjoyed the SoHG Championship Series and have tried to play in all of them the past two years," he says.

"I am honored that I was asked to run for the Board and if elected hope I can offer some positive assistance. Hickory golf has a limited appeal in the normal world of sports. We have to get younger players interested; show them how hickory golf and modern golf can go together. The booth at the PGA Show in Orlando was a great idea and we got terrific exposure. Sally and I use hickories at our club and dress up every so often. This has led to a few of our members purchasing hickories and we do a couples thing at least once a month. The ladies seem to enjoy the vintage clothing. Let's try to encourage more women to play hickory golf, at home and in the tournaments, and push the fashion as well as the golf. Make the courses real short and easy. I would like to offer my help in continuing the great work that has been done and help it progress."

