



TJ Grant, Tony Smith, Kevin Leach and Steve Lam were the winners of the final Bobby J Tournament.

25 years of the Bobby J, and that's a wrap!

The Bob Jefferson Memorial Golf Tournament - affectionately known as 'The Bobby J' – got its start quite humbly, like most new ventures do.

In the early days, the always enthusiastic Bob went to lengths he deemed necessary to make sure the tournament bearing his name and supporting the Selkirk & District Community Foundation would have an acceptable number of participants.

According to Michael Buhr, with IG Wealth Management In Selkirk, host of the tournament in recent years, Bob's committed and caring ways defined the Bobby J.

“I found this tournament always had a different vibe, more of a relaxed, casual feel,” Buhr said.

“When Bob first started, he paid for a number of teams to play, just because he wanted people to participate. And every year we’d all get in our carts and go off to our holes, and then when you came back to the 18th hole, you’d see about eight carts that nobody had started, because they didn’t show up.

“Bob had just signed up these people and told them you’re in this golf tournament. He wanted it to be inclusive in the community. I think that speaks to the casualness, the easy-goingness of the event.”

This past September marked the 25th year of the Bobby J, and 10 years since it became a memorial event following Bob’s passing. It will go down in history as the last Bobby J tournament.

“We kept it up to honour Bob and honour his commitment to the Foundation and honour his commitment to the community,” Buhr said.

“At the same time I think we have to draw a close to honour Bob’s memory, and legacy, at a milestone of 25 years.”

Jefferson was so fully behind the Foundation, that the tournament was started to raise funds to pay administrative costs of the fledgling SDCF.

“It was crucial at the beginning to the administration, the nuts and bolts, day-to-day operations of the Foundation,” Buhr said.

“Bob’s tournament helped raise awareness of the Foundation and because of the momentum it created, you’re now in a position where the Foundation is large enough that it’s self-sufficient, essentially, from an administration perspective.”

In its 25 years, the Bobby J raised more than \$165,000 for the Foundation’s administration.

Bev Clegg, Executive Director of the Foundation, says the days leading up to the annual September tournament were bittersweet this year, knowing that it would be the last.

“In a way it’s sad because it’s something so many of us have come together for every September,” Clegg said.

“The tournament was like Bob himself, it was resilient and forged on no matter what. When Bob passed, it became a memorial tournament that honoured its namesake’s sense of fun and philanthropy. When Covid hit, we swapped out dinner inside for food on the course. I think Bob would have loved that.”

The foursome of TJ Grant, Tony Smith, Kevin Leach and Steve Lam were the winners of the final Bobby J tournament. All but Smith are Steeltown Ford employees and Grant says they looked forward to the September event.

“It’s always been one of Steeltown Ford’s favourite golf tournaments to play in,” said Grant.

“Bobby J was a great philanthropist for our small but strong community and Mike Buhr and his team have always done a great job organizing the tournament.”

Just because there won’t be a formal tournament next September, Clegg plans on honouring Jefferson anyway.

“I’m pretty sure that next September I’ll be out golfing with my friends and toasting Bobby J and donating to the Foundation in his memory. I think it will be a very Bob thing to do.”

Bobby J truly was ‘one in a million’. Thanks to all who supported and participated in the Bobby J for the past 25 years.