



Inducted: 2021

Category: Player (Amateur)

Born: 1882

Birthplace: Tottenham, Ontario

Deceased: 1977, Ottawa, Ontario

Canadian Championships:

1909 & 1914 - Canadian Open

1919 - Canadian Open Runner-up

Provincial Championships:

1919 - Manitoba Open

1926 - Quebec Open

Local Championships:

1911 & 1913 - Caledonia Springs Open

Halls of Fame:

1986 - Canadian Golf Hall of Fame

2000 - Ontario Golf Hall of Fame

2014 - PGA of Canada Hall of Fame

2017 - Quebec Golf Hall of Fame

2021 - OVGA Hall of Fame

Karl Keffer joined the then Ottawa Golf Club in 1911 and stayed as their head professional until 1945. The Ottawa Golf Club received its "Royal" designation in 1912. Mr. Keffer spent his winters between 1910-1942 working at the Jekyll Island Club on Jekyll Island, Georgia.

Although little is known about Mr. Keffer's time at the Royal Ottawa, we have been able to piece together some background information from Royal Ottawa member King Finney, who is in his mid-90's and who took his first lesson on the Royal Nine in 1931 with Karl Keffer, and Charlie Wakelam, son of Ernie Wakelam who was Karl's assistant and eventual successor as head professional in 1943.

According to King Finney, "Karl was a man of principle who played by the rules and knew his place at the Club. He addressed everyone as sir or madam, even the junior members. He spent a lot of time in his workshop making and repairing golf clubs and left the pro shop to his assistants. Karl didn't play a lot of golf at the Royal Ottawa, but he loved to watch his members play and putt, especially on the 18th green and he could tell the members by their swings. Karl did enjoy a drink, and at the end of the workday would go to the kitchen, where bar service originated, to get a drink.

"Karl was made an honorary member of the club, but only once did he sit on the veranda and that was with George Cumming who was given the same honour at the Toronto Golf Club. After a game of golf, Karl did not want to sit on the veranda, but Mr. Cumming insisted that Karl sit with him as his guest. One must remember that it was unusual for golf professionals in that era to enter the clubhouse or any portion thereof."

Charlie Wakelam remembers, "Mr. Keffer was a quiet man who never raised his voice. He was generous to a fault. He loaned my dad money to buy a house and only asked that the money be paid back when Ernie was able to pay. Mr. Keffer hired a man down on his luck to garden for him even though he didn't need the work done. Once my dad arrived as an assistant professional, Mr. Keffer let him handle the majority of lessons at the Club. One thing I do remember about Mr. Keffer was that he always drove a Cadillac. Mr. Keffer enjoyed the company of his fellow golf professionals and their Sunday afternoon competitions. He had the respect of his fellow CPGA golf professionals, his membership at Royal Ottawa and also the golf community in the Ottawa area."

Karl Keffer was awarded an Honorary Membership at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club on October 14, 1929 for his "faithful and meritorious service". This was a rare honour for its time as only George Cumming of the Toronto GC and Charlie Murray of the Royal Montreal had been awarded honorary memberships. A Royal Ottawa member at the time spoke about Karl Keffer. "Not only was he a great golfer, he was also a fine Canadian, a man and a gentleman."

Karl Keffer profile information from 2011 July edition of Flagstick Golf Magazine