



## Philip Vassie Ritson

January 30, 1930 - August 19, 2017

In 1952, after winning the PGA Western Province Professional Purse; 1953 winning the South African Dunlop Masters and receiving South Africa's highest athletic award, the Springbok Honors (1953), Phil passionately, re-dedicated his life's work to the Art of Golf Education. As Phil stated, "I'd rather stand on the tee helping students, than play golf." Phil Ritson would spend the next sixty-seven years as a Golf Professional and Golf Educator, teaching the under-privileged, PGA and LPGA Touring Pros, Hollywood Stars, musicians, CEOs, Wall Street titans, family and friends.

Phil's professional golf instructional career continued in the United States, when in 1975, the Walt Disney Group invited Phil to leave South Africa. By 1977, Phil was the Chairman of the Disney Classic, Orlando, Florida, and a Company Director, and Golf Director at Walt Disney World, Orlando, Florida, (1977–1981).

In the early 1980's, Phil was beckoned to follow his calling as a creative visionary, golf course architect and designer, which led him to Ocala, Florida, where he developed Golden Ocala.

In 1997, Phil Ritson was the Founder of the Orange County National Golf Center and Lodge in Winter Garden, Florida, as well as the Golf Course Architect and Project Co-Designer.

In January 2007, GOLF MAGAZINE rightfully honored Phil Ritson with "EMERITUS STATUS: Top 100 Teacher For Life." "This honor distinguishes those who have significantly changed the way the game of golf is taught, learned and played, contributing a tradition of teaching excellence and innovation."

On December 22, 2010, Phil traveled to George, South Africa where he was inducted into the Southern Africa Golf Hall of Fame, and was acknowledged as still ranking in the top 5 Golf Coaches in the World.

As Phil stated, "Golf has a common bond, a universal language that crosses all boundaries. Not all whom you teach will be Stars, but what a wonderful world they will live, playing this marvelous game well – for a lifetime."

Phil was 87 at his time of passing and was surrounded by friends and family members. We want to send many thanks to Cornerstone Hospice.

# Comments

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“ I think only those who were really close to Phil really knew him. Great man amazing talent and fortitude. I think had he decided to play he would have been a force to be reckoned with. My daughter and I will truly miss you old friend.

Matt and Sophie Benetti



**Matt Benetti** - August 23, 2017 at 10:13 PM

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“ Mr. Phil Ritson was one of the first people that I met when I came to Florida back in late 1999. He was gracious and always ready to help anyone that needed assistance not only in golf, but in making crucial life decisions. A true legend in the golf industry....he will always be remembered best by his grin and his keen ability to get the most out of any student. But mainly, I remember him by his kindness towards me when I was searching and creating my path in golf. We will all miss him. Dr. Robert K. Winters

**Dr. Robert K. Winters** - August 22, 2017 at 06:19 PM

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“ Mr. Ritson was a legend. So sorry to all his family.

**Kacie** - August 22, 2017 at 01:34 PM

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“ Our thoughts are with his family. Phil was the sweetest, and most giving man. His accomplishments were remarkable and he was so good and easy with his teaching. God bless him may he rest in piece!

Frank and Linda Dillon

**linda and frank dillon** - August 22, 2017 at 07:33 AM