

Advertisement:

**TRIB**  
**local** Highland Park/Highwood

## Celebration of Caddies....Legend and Lore – Highwood Historical Society Fundraiser

Friday, September 23, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. Exmoor Country Club, 700 Vine Ave. Highland Park, IL 60035 Tel: 847-432-3600



### The Story

The history of Highwood and Highland Park is replete with stories of young men rising with the sun to carry a bag of clubs for the gentry of the country club set throughout Chicago's famous North Shore. Internationally known country clubs like Bob O'Link, Exmoor, Lake Shore and Old Elm have employed these young gentlemen (and, as of late, young ladies) through their formative years. Caddying afforded them an opportunity to help support their families, raise money to buy their first cars and homes, or put themselves through college. Young men as young as 9 and others well into adulthood have taken advantage of the many opportunities caddying has afforded.

Caddying helped young men create lifelong friendships with other caddies and with the members of the many clubs they "looped" at. Caddying also afforded these young men the opportunity to meet the likes of Bing Crosby, Mike Ditka, Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods. What 13 year old hasn't daydreamed of spending time with these amazing athletes and celebrities? Many Highwood and Highland Park Caddies did.

### The Celebration

The Highwood Historical Society's September 23 event entitled "Caddies, Legend and Lore" will celebrate and capture the extraordinary local history of the hardworking young men and the supportive country club set that helped afford these young men an extraordinary opportunity to make a better life for themselves. The MC for the evening will be Ed Piagentini Bernardi, former Highwood resident, recipient of the Evans Scholarship and founder of Bernardi Securities. Ed tells a good tale as do the many caddies and country club members that are attending and expected to share their stories in what promises a wonderful evening sharing friendship and fond memories. This is an evening that celebrates all that the North Shore has to offer through the amazing people that live here. Members and caddies from all the local clubs are invited to attend and celebrate the legends and lore of North Shore Caddies. It isn't just the story of the caddy shack, it's the story of the American Dream.

### History and Background

At the turn of the 20th Century, country clubs were being built all around the growing North Shore. It was the heart of the industrial revolution and many of the revolution's most illustrious names called North Shore communities home.

The clubs provided many job opportunities and attracted people from everywhere. My grandmother, her mother and her best friend all came from Iowa in the early 20's. Stephanie Sedik, youth librarian at Highland Park Library and Highwood resident, remembers her grandmother, who worked at Exmoor, telling the story of the ads she'd placed in national newspapers. The clubs provided steady work and the Italian immigrants were loyal employees that worked hard.

At the turn of the 20th Century Highwood was home to many Swedish and Irish descendents. The first newspaper article of an Italian is in 1917. As a few Italian immigrants moved to the community, word spread quickly. Many immigrants of Italian descent who had settled in Texas, Colorado, Iowa and southern Illinois to work in a coal mine heard about “un clobbo di golfo.” moved to Highwood to work at the many clubs. The golf club was seen as an avenue to a better life, a way to escape the dangers, dependency, and depression that often marked a coal mining life.

Since the turn of the century 1000’s of local young men (and women) have worked at North Shore Country Clubs as caddies and in many other positions. The clubs and their members are an important part of the North Shore experience. Members would often provide jobs to graduating caddies, in some instances they would provide individual scholarships but most importantly, they would provide an inspiration to excel.

#### Chick Evans Scholarships

Over 60 local Highwood and Highland Park caddies have been chosen for the Evans Scholars Foundation. From Pete Trucano in 1939 (now a Doctor), Ed Bernardi (Founder of Bernardi Securities and Master of ceremonies for the Caddies Legend and Lore event) to Moses Amidei (City administrator for Wasdworth) the Evans Scholars program has changed lives.

The Evans Scholars Foundation oversees the Chick Evans Scholarship Program, one of the nation’s largest privately funded college scholarship programs, providing full tuition and housing grants to deserving caddies for up to four years. The grants are valued at more than \$70,000 per Scholar when renewed for the full four years. Since the first two Scholars enrolled at Northwestern University in 1930, more than 9,400 young men and women have graduated as Evans Scholars. Currently, 855 Scholars live at one of 14 Foundation-owned Scholarship Houses at top universities throughout the country.

The Chick Evans Scholarship Program was established by and named for Charles “Chick” Evans, Jr. one of golf’s all-time greats. He became famous in 1916 when he won both the U. S. Open and the U. S. Amateur, becoming the first golfer ever to capture both tournaments in the same year. He remained an amateur his entire life, using his earnings to create a trust fund to benefit deserving caddies.

Candidates must meet four primary criteria to qualify for an Evans Scholarship.

- They must be nominated by their golf or country club and have caddied for at least two years regularly and successfully.
- They must have an excellent high school academic record, a “B” average or better.

Applicants must also provide ACT scores.

- They must demonstrate significant financial need.
- They must demonstrate outstanding character and community leadership.

At 14 Universities, Evans Scholars live and work together in a Foundation-owned Scholarship House. In this environment, students develop leadership and communication skills. Most houses are co-educational.

The sense of community fostered through group living enables each of the 14 Houses to rank at or near the top in both academic and extracurricular activities compared to other campus organizations. Scholars pay an annual housing fee, and all students take part in House maintenance.

Nearly two-thirds of the Scholars maintain a “B” average or better, and their graduation rate is over 90 percent, compared to a 50 percent national average.

The Western Golf Association, founded in 1899 to conduct tournaments and promote the general interests of golf, sponsors the Evans Scholars program. More than 35,000 golfers from across the country donate \$250 or more to the WGA Evans Scholars Par Club, which is a primary funding source of the program, and all proceeds from the BMW Championship, conducted by the WGA, also benefit the Evans Scholars. Evans Alumni have donated more than \$50 million to the Foundation since the program began.

#### Opportunity for everyone

For Highwood and Highland Park, caddying isn’t just a story about immigrants and middle income kids looking for a way to get ahead. It is also a story about the men (and women) of means who provided opportunities to excel. Young men flocked to the courses to earn a living. They also learned a gentlemen’s game and were introduced to a different way of life. Because of the changing attitude of the landed gentry of the time, that their position was to be a father figure to a young boy and not a master to his servant, these young men were afforded great opportunities in addition to a days pay. For these young men, the American dream became a possibility and the benefactors made lifelong friends and relationships..

The Chick Evans Scholarship, the Western Illinois University Leatherneck Golf Program (which was run by Highwoodian Harry Mussatto), and other public and private scholarships were created for these young men. Many of these scholarships provided financial assistance, living accommodations and a full ride for four years at schools like Northwestern University in Evanston, an opportunity that would never have been available to them otherwise.

Many of these young men went on to become “industrialists” themselves, many becoming part of the country club set as adults, and carrying on the tradition of providing a training ground, inspiration, and philanthropy to other young men who show great promise.

The information

Join the Highwood Historical Society on September 23, at Exmoor Country Club and help us celebrate a tradition the Chicago’s North Shore can be extremely proud of. Join us as we Celebrate Caddies...Legend and Lore.

Tickets are \$65.00

Cocktails at 6 PM

Dinner at 7 PM

Send check to:

Highwood Historical Society

PO Box 132

Highwood, IL

For information Call 847-433-2984

Proceeds from the evening’s event help support the Highwood Historical Society. Dedicated to preserving the History of Highwood and the surrounding area.

**Contact:** Lisa Cervac, 847-433-2984, [highwoodhistory@aol.com](mailto:highwoodhistory@aol.com)

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By ripple publicrelations Community Member Thursday at 12:27 p.m.