

LEGACY MAILING

ROBERT TRENT JONES SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2026 EDITION



HOLE HIGHLIGHT:
**THE 16TH AT PORT
ROYAL IN BERMUDA**

ESTABLISHED 2004

The Sun Never Sets on the
Robert Trent Jones Empire



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2026 ANNUAL GATHERING RECAP

RECORD TURNOUT AND WONDERFUL MEMORIES

BY SOCIETY PRESIDENT DAVID LEIGH

The 2026 Annual Meeting was a huge success on many fronts. For those who couldn't attend, this year's AGM at Firestone Country Club was a significant turning point in our Society. Not only did we play on two Robert Trent Jones-designed courses, but we also played an RTJ-designed major championship venue. We also sold out the tee sheet and had a record number of Society member clubs in attendance. Almost a third of the Society clubs were present, which was outstanding considering our international clubs did not attend.

Before golf on both the North and storied South courses, we were treated to a fantastic history presentation by Dick Robbins, who is both the Society's historian and that of Firestone. Dick offered a personal recap of his 52-year career at Firestone, in addition to historical facts and trivia. It was amazing to listen to Dick recount the history of both courses and tournament highlights without notes! The first morning also offered a "State of the Society" presentation. In short, the Society continues to grow stronger with a slate of exciting events, a strong balance sheet and a record number of clubs - 45. But the highlight of Day One before golf was the video of presenting the fifth annual Legacy Award to Ohioans Jack & Barbara Nicklaus. The Nicklauses were very gracious and told stories about their wonderful charity work, their marriage and memories of Firestone. After a full morning and a group photo, the attendees were anxious to hit the courses. The weather had other ideas.

Fortunately, the major thunderstorm only caused a minor one-hour delay. Both courses drained well and golf resumed. Over the next two days, the field of 90+ participants played both the North and South courses in a 36-hole format. Groups were able to pause briefly to be joined by Robert Trent Jones Jr. and Trent Jones for photos on the courses and to reminisce with Bobby, sharing stories of his father's genius. Bobby and Trent were on hand for evening activities, and many participants had a wonderful opportunity to visit with them throughout the festivities.

On the last night, we were honored to have 2019 Donald Ross Award winner Joe Passov give a spirited talk, "In Praise of Modern Golf Courses," recapping both RTJ's genius in design and the practical side of golf's expansion from 1945 to 1995. It was educational, inspiring and entertaining.

Seabrook Island Club won the team victory and the stewardship of the Jones Cup for the next year. The final standings of the team and individual competitions can be found on the website. The evening concluded with the news that next year's AGM will be held at Bellerive CC in St. Louis, also the site of several major championships in its own right.

Our hosts at Firestone were first-rate, and we were honored to have the 2026 event at such a prestigious club. Their hospitality, staffing and care for our event were amazing. It could not have gone any better and sets a new bar by which future events will be measured.

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Photos: Scott Moss Magical Memories Photography, LLC



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2026 RTJ Society Award Winners

Legacy Award

Jack & Barbara Nicklaus

Club of the Year

Midvale Country Club

Delegate of the Year

Vince Formato, North Hills Country Club

Host Club Award

Presented to Firestone Country Club



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REPLAY: JACK AND BARBARA NICKLAUS INTERVIEW



The Robert Trent Jones Society has announced that **Jack and Barbara Nicklaus are the recipients of the 2026 Society Legacy Award**, recognizing their extraordinary lifetime contributions to golf, their enduring support for the game's traditions and values, and their far-reaching commitment to philanthropy.

The Legacy Award was established in the name of Robert Trent Jones, Sr. to honor individuals whose lives and work have helped expand, strengthen, and elevate the game of golf. Jack Nicklaus, whose record 18 professional major championships and global design influence have shaped generations of players and courses, and Barbara Nicklaus, widely admired for her leadership, grace, and charitable impact, embody the spirit of the award.

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ROBERT TRENT JONES SOCIETY WELCOMES JOE PASSOV AS KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR 2026 ANNUAL MEETING

BY PRESIDENT DAVID LEIGH

The Robert Trent Jones Society welcomed Joe Passov, the Golf Writers Association of America award-winning journalist and respected voice on golf travel, history and course architecture, as keynote speaker at the Society's 22nd annual meeting, held September 11-13, 2026, at Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio.

Passov's keynote address, "In Praise of Golf Course Architecture's Modern Era: 1945-1995," examined one of the most influential periods in golf course design and placed it in context for Society members, whose annual gathering celebrates the legacy and continuing influence of golf course architect Robert Trent Jones, Sr.

The 2026 Annual Meeting was hosted by Firestone Country Club, a renowned golf venue whose South Course was redesigned by Robert Trent Jones, Sr. in 1960 and whose North Course was also designed by Jones. The gathering featured golf, fellowship, Society programming and opportunities to experience two of Jones' noted works.

"Joe Passov brings a rare combination of deep architectural knowledge, storytelling skill and first-hand experience with many of the world's great courses," said David Leigh, President of the Robert Trent Jones Society. "His perspective on golf course architecture's modern era was especially meaningful for our members as we gathered at Firestone Country Club."

Passov has written about golf since 1991, with a specialty in travel, golf course architecture and history. Perhaps best known for his "Travelin' Joe" columns, he has published more than 2,000 articles in nearly 100 publications across North America, the U.K. and Asia, including work for the Wall Street Journal, Sports Illustrated and LINKS.

In 2019, the American Society of Golf Course Architects honored Passov with the Donald Ross Award, presented for contributions to golf and the profession of golf course architecture. From 2005 to 2018, he served as Managing Editor for Travel and Course Rankings at GOLF Magazine and GOLF.com, including service as chairman of the international panel that ranked GOLF Magazine's Top 100 Courses in the World.

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CONTINUED...

Passov previously served as Editor-in-Chief of LINKS Magazine and as a senior staff editor at several major national golf publications. He is a past member of the Golf Digest National Course Ranking Panel and the Golfweek Course Raters team. He is currently a co-host of the LINKS Magazine golf podcast. An avid traveler, Passov has played nearly 1,400 golf courses in all 50 U.S. states and 35 countries. His travels include 77 courses where Robert Trent Jones worked, including 51 original designs. As a media member, he has attended or covered 18 Masters, 13 U.S. Opens, seven Ryder Cups and many other significant professional and amateur golf events.

Passov is the author of eight golf books, including club histories for Hillcrest Country Club in Los Angeles, Enhance Anting in Shanghai, the Mirabel Club in Scottsdale and the Dunes Golf and Beach Club in Myrtle Beach. He also completed anniversary and restoration books for Lakeside Golf Club and Desert Mountain Club and contributed the golf chapter for the 50th anniversary book for Mauna Kea Beach Resort.

Passov graduated from the University of Arizona in 1984 and received his law degree from the University of Nebraska in 1988. He lives in Scottsdale, Arizona, with his wife, Betsy.

The Robert Trent Jones Society is committed to preserving the ways Jones expanded the game—for example, through modern industrial construction techniques, the use of statistics to shape course design for all players, care for the environment, improving turf conditions and, of course, “heroic” shot values. He supported municipal golf available to all, mentored countless architects and expanded modern designs around the world across different climates. Most importantly, Jones pioneered a deep appreciation for the tapestry of the game. He said it best himself in his autobiography, Golf’s Magnificent Challenge: “If I am to be remembered, I hope it is not just for the golf courses I built but for the other contributions as well to the game I love, to the game that has been my life.”

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SOCIETY NEWS

QUAKER HILL JOINS THE SOCIETY



Quaker Hill Country Club



Photo: Quaker Hill Country Club

Quaker Hill Country Club, located in Pawling, New York, joins the Robert Trent Jones Society as the society's **45th member**.

Quaker Hill's stunning hilltop setting was chosen by **founder Lowell Thomas** in the late 1930s for its sweeping views and natural beauty. **He enlisted renowned architect Robert Trent Jones Sr. to design a course** that would challenge skilled golfers while remaining enjoyable for players of all abilities.

Since opening in 1940, the course has welcomed **generations of members and guests, including legends such as Sam Snead and Gene Sarazen**. Today, Quaker Hill remains true to its roots: exceptional golf in a relaxed setting, where great rounds are measured as much by the company you keep as the score you shoot.

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PRESIDENT'S CUP PREVIEW RTJ SR.'S CONNECTION TO MEDINAH

Photo: Presidents Cup

The Presidents Cup Returns the Spotlight to Robert Trent Jones Sr.'s Legacy at Medinah

As the **2026 Presidents Cup** takes place **September 24-27** at **Medinah Country Club** outside Chicago, Robert Trent Jones Society members have a special connection to this historic championship venue.

Originally designed by Tom Bendelow, **Medinah's courses underwent renovations by Robert Trent Jones Sr., including Course No. 1 in 1991 and the famed Course No. 3 in 1994.** His son, Rees Jones, continued the family's architectural connection through subsequent renovations of Course No. 3 ahead of the 2006 PGA Championship and 2012 Ryder Cup.

This week, the world's leading American and international golfers will compete on Course No. 3, which underwent another major renovation completed in 2024. **The championship offers Society members an opportunity to celebrate the Jones family's contributions to Medinah** and appreciate the continuing evolution of one of America's most historic golf venues.



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PORT ROYAL GOLF COURSE JOINS PASSPORT PROGRAM

The Robert Trent Jones Society is pleased to welcome **Port Royal Golf Course in Bermuda** to its **Passport Program**.

Known for its breathtaking Atlantic Ocean views and championship layout, **Port Royal joins an exclusive reciprocal network of distinguished Robert Trent Jones, Sr.-designed courses**, offering members another opportunity to experience his enduring architectural legacy.

Members of participating clubs can arrange reciprocal access through their Head Professional or Director of Golf, subject to each course's terms and fees. Visit the Robert Trent Jones Society website to explore participating courses and plan your next round.

Your next great golf experience may be just a Passport away!

Photo: Port Royal Golf Course

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MEMBER SHOWCASE

THE SOCIETY'S SIX UNIVERSITY CLUBS

Photo: West Point GC

Robert Trent Jones, Sr.: A Lasting Legacy in University Golf

Robert Trent Jones Sr.'s connection to university golf began at Cornell University, where he arrived in 1928 and developed his own curriculum combining landscape architecture, agronomy, horticulture, surveying and art to pursue his passion for golf course design. While at Cornell, he designed nine holes of the university's golf course, which opened in 1941, before returning to complete the 18-hole layout in 1954.

His work at Cornell helped establish a legacy in collegiate golf that extended to Cornell University GC, Duke University GC, University of Georgia GC, Colgate University Seven Oaks GC, Eisenhower GC (Blue Course), at the U.S. Air Force Academy, and West Point GC.

Today, all six are university members of the Robert Trent Jones Society, reflecting the enduring importance of his designs in providing opportunities for student-athletes, faculty and future generations to experience the game. Cornell also preserves his architectural legacy through its collection of his professional papers, donated by his sons, Rees and Robert Trent Jones Jr., in 2009.



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SOCIETY BIO NEWS

DID YOU KNOW?

Like many young men of his era, **Robert Trent Jones did not receive a high school diploma.** That did not stop him from bettering himself, particularly in pursuing further education.

While working as a draftsman in Rochester, New York, RTJ struck up a conversation about golf (what else!) with his boss's boss, a Cornell graduate. That gentleman suggested Cornell might hold the key to **crafting a curriculum to assist RTJ in pursuing golf course architecture.**

After several years of playing competitive golf and working, **Jones started at Cornell in 1928. However, he did not enroll! Instead, he successfully convinced faculty to allow him to create his own curriculum: landscape architecture from the College of Architecture, agronomy from the College of Agriculture,** surveying from the School of Engineering, and public speaking, to name a few. And even though he was not formally enrolled, his fellow Cornell students elected him president of the university chapter of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity!

By age 24, he was now ready to move on. Together with art classes in sketch work and an innate ability to visualize topography, he was anxious to move ahead with a newfound career in golf course architecture. By the way, even today, **RTJ's blended curriculum serves most architects, as there remains NO degree offered in golf course architecture.**

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SOCIETY BIO NEWS SERIES CONTINUED

THE ROBERT TRENT JONES, SR. LEGACY

Thompson and the WPA (1930-1938)

Robert Trent Jones, Sr.'s partnership with Canadian architect Stanley Thompson began in 1930, allowing Jones to learn from one of golf's leading designers. During the Great Depression, Jones secured public golf course projects funded through government relief programs, helping make professionally designed golf more accessible. His successful 1935 redesign of Green Lakes State Park Golf Course helped establish his financial footing and growing reputation. By 1938, Jones had developed his own design philosophy and published his landmark manifesto, *Golf Course Architecture*.

Post-War Success (1945-1949)

Following World War II, Jones entered a period of remarkable growth. In 1945, he met legendary golfer Bobby Jones, beginning a lifelong association that culminated in their joint design of Peachtree Golf Club. As the youngest charter member of the Association of Golf Course Architects in 1947, Jones helped establish professional standards for the industry. His 1948 redesign of Augusta National's iconic par-3 16th hole and celebrated designs at the Dunes Golf and Beach Club in Myrtle Beach further solidified his reputation. These achievements positioned Jones as a leading architect during the post-war golf boom and the rise of golf tourism.

The Open Doctor (1950-1959)

Jones earned his reputation as "The Open Doctor" through his ability to transform golf courses into demanding championship venues. His redesign of Oakland Hills Country Club set the stage for Ben Hogan's historic victory at the 1951 U.S. Open, while his work at Baltusrol further demonstrated his approach to challenging yet fair course architecture. A 1951 profile in *The New Yorker* brought national attention to his design philosophy. By the end of the decade, Jones had developed an impressive collection of championship-ready courses, including Point O'Woods, Old Warson, Bellerive, Duke University and Otter Creek. His collaboration with Laurance Rockefeller on Dorado Beach in Puerto Rico also opened the door to prestigious resort projects around the world, expanding his influence beyond championship golf.

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HOLE HIGHLIGHT

16TH AT PORT ROYAL



Photo: Port Royal Golf Course

Par 3, 235 yards

Robert Trent Jones Sr.'s design of the iconic par-3 16th hole at **Port Royal Golf Course in Bermuda** demonstrates his ability to transform challenging terrain into extraordinary golf architecture. During the course's original development in the late 1960s, a local landowner's refusal to sell property forced Jones to reconsider his routing. Rather than compromise the design, he embraced the dramatic coastal landscape, creating a 235-yard par 3 perched along the cliffs overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

The 16th embodies Jones's philosophy of incorporating natural beauty into strategic golf course design.

Renovated in 2008-09 by Roger Rulewich, a member of Jones's original design team, Port Royal has preserved the hole's distinctive character. Today, it remains the course's signature hole and a celebrated feature of the PGA TOUR's Bermuda Championship, illustrating Jones's enduring influence on golf course architecture.

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WE CARE TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR CLUB

Have something to share?

We welcome updates from member clubs, including tournaments, renovations, clubhouse news, and historical insights tied to the legacy of Robert Trent Jones, Sr. Submit content anytime to **MemberHappenings@RTJSociety.com** for potential inclusion in future LEGACY mailings.

Have an idea for future features?

LEGACY is designed to grow with our membership. We encourage suggestions such as favorite RTJ-designed holes, archival photos, and unique club stories. **Share your ideas at MemberHappenings@RTJSociety.com or with your Executive Sponsor.**

Warmly,
David Leigh
President
Robert Trent Jones Society