

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENT

# John Easterbrook

By Micaela Myers

When John Easterbrook walked on to the Cowboys golf team in 1981, no one knew he'd one day become a leader in the golf industry.

Growing up, Easterbrook spent summers with his grandfather, PGA of America Golf Professional Bob Klewin. While Easterbrook's golf bug was planted early, his father was offensive coordinator for Wyoming Cowboy football, and Easterbrook played football in high school. Starting at UW, he made the ultimately life-altering decision to switch to golf and went on to become the team captain and earn all-conference honors. He graduated with a finance degree in 1985.

Easterbrook's career started in golf operations for Marriott and Hyatt. In 1997, he moved to the golf management company Troon. As executive vice president and chief operating officer, he was instrumental in building the foundation and hiring the team at what is now the world's leader in golf management. At Troon, he oversaw the company's expansion to operations in 38 states and 31 countries, supervised more than 15,000 associates and helped generate over \$1.8 billion in annual revenues.

In 2017, Easterbrook took on the role of chief member officer for the PGA of America, where he oversees the membership programming and benefits for the 30,000-plus members and sits on the executive committee for PGA of America and the Global PGA Alliance. Easterbrook is himself a 38-year PGA of America member. His responsibilities include directing career services, education, membership services, section operations, properties, player engagement, member communications, membership governance and global and PGA of America vendor relationships.

During the pandemic, Easterbrook took a leadership position for the industry and was instrumental in getting the game of golf reopened —

making it the first sport to do so. This effort included many calls with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the White House. Since that time, golf has seen tremendous growth.

"I've been lucky to travel the world with this amazing game that touches so many lives and changes so many lives," Easterbrook says. "Golf has



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the ability to connect families, it has the ability to help rehabilitate our veterans, and our golf professionals are really special people."

Easterbrook and his wife, Lori, have three daughters and live in Plano, Texas. He has spent the last four years as the PGA of America point person overseeing the construction and opening of PGA Frisco, a world-class golf destination that has a number of major championships already on the schedule — the first was hosted last year, and the 2025 KPMG Women's PGA Championship and 2027 PGA Championship will be coming soon.

Still, Easterbrook considers Laramie home and remains closely connected to UW. His professional

achievements and service earned him a 2024 UWAA Distinguished Alumni Award.

“Attending the University of Wyoming is the best choice I ever made,” Easterbrook says.

He fondly recalls practicing golf inside War Memorial Fieldhouse or in the snow. At the time, the golf team was fledgling, but the team was dedicated. Also while at UW, Easterbrook served as president of Sigma Nu fraternity, and he credits the College of Business professors with giving him a strong foundation in business principles.

“I try to wear my Steamboat logo at every event I attend,” Easterbrook says. “I love that it is a conversation starter.”

The relationships Easterbrook made at UW helped set him up for success, and they motivated him to stay involved and give back.

“Wyoming people genuinely care about the success of other Wyoming people, and that’s ingrained in me: See the good in people, see what they’re trying to accomplish, and see where you can help them,” he says.

John and Lori helped the UW golf team grow and prosper. Easterbrook also served on the UWAA Board of Directors, the UW Foundation Advisory Board, the Cowboy Joe Club Board and the UW Athletics Board of Directors.

“Lori and I have really enjoyed our connection to Cowboy Joe and the golf teams,” Easterbrook says. “Working with Coach Joe Jensen to start our Cowboy Collegiate golf events and the years spent working with Cowboy Joe and the Alumni Association are by far some of my greatest memories.”

Easterbrook also takes leadership roles in many important golf industry initiatives, including Make Golf Your Thing, PGA Works, PGA HOPE and all PGA of America REACH programming. Additional past service includes the Arizona Elite Girls Basketball Club, the charity event board for Phoenix Children’s Hospital, the Colorado PGA trustees and University of Colorado Springs Advisory Board.

He credits his family with instilling this pay-it-forward attitude: “My parents were always giving back and trying to do more for others. I think if you have the means — whether it’s time or money — it’s our responsibility to pay it forward. My mother always said, ‘Johnny, leave it better than you found it.’”

Easterbrook wants UW alumni to know that they too can reach the highest levels: “Be proud of where you went to school. You can accomplish anything you want. UW prepares you very well. You understand how to get along with people, how to get things done and how to be successful in business.”

Jacoby  
Golf Course

