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A CONVERSATION *with* GREG MCLAUGHLIN

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By Debbie Lavdas

As President and CEO of the Tiger Woods Corporation, which comprises the Tiger Woods Event Corporation and Foundation, Greg McLaughlin spearheads one of the most successful endeavors ever undertaken by a professional athlete. He also has been friends with the world's number one golfer for more than two decades.

Through his years working with Woods, McLaughlin is responsible for launching his signature fundraising events and has also helped the Corporation attain more than \$130 million in total assets. The Cincinnati native spends his days crossing the country overseeing major fundraising events and charitable programs. When not working, McLaughlin can be found on the golf course, trying to perfect his 13.1 handicap index. During a recent interview with *Pelican Hill Magazine*, he shared stories of time playing on the links with Tiger and of lives changed through Woods' organization.



## WHAT SPARKED THE TIGER WOODS FOUNDATION'S PASSION FOR EDUCATION?

The vision came from Tiger. After the attacks on 9/11, Tiger really felt inspired to do more, and that's when he came up with the idea of the Tiger Woods Learning Center. He wanted to provide a permanent space where young people can feel safe and really explore the possibilities for their futures. From there, we took the ball and ran with it. In 2006, we opened our 14-acre flagship facility in Anaheim, which has since reached more than 100,000 young people and expanded into Washington, DC, Philadelphia, PA and Stuart, FL. We also created the Earl Woods Scholarship Program in 2006. We really wanted to honor Earl's leadership and commitment to young people, and today we have nearly 100 scholars attending universities all across the U.S.

OVER 87 PERCENT OF THE TWF SCHOLARS ARE FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS. YOU'RE CHANGING LIVES AND GENERATIONS, NO?

We really believe in the life-changing power of helping

someone attain a college education because it changes the course of that family's history. First-generation scholars face very unique obstacles. Sometimes there's tremendous community and family pressure to quit school and work instead. Others feel insecure about really "belonging" at college and need guidance finding a peer group. We work with them daily to stay in school and keep their sights set on their long-term goals. This is where our mentorship program is critical. We pair every scholar with a dedicated mentor and that relationship has been invaluable to our scholars' success and extremely rewarding to every mentor involved with the program. We also help our students prepare for life after college through our workshops and internship program. We offer resume building, networking, mock interviews, speaker panels and graduate school planning.

To date, 100 percent of our scholars graduate with a bachelor's degree or better. We are very proud of this statistic given how hard each one of them has worked to achieve this goal.

One student who comes to mind is Grace, a computer science student at Berkeley. Midway through college, she experienced some real hardships at home, her parent's immigration status changed, drastically affecting her tuition and their livelihood. This led to real financial and emotional difficulty for all of them and Grace was not sure how she could continue her education. Thankfully, she turned to her mentor and the Foundation staff for help. It was hard work getting her through this trying time, but we did. Now she has graduated and is working at NASA. Her story is so powerful and is reflected in just about every scholar we serve.

## THE TWF RECENTLY EARNED THE ELITE STATUS OF BEING RATED A 4-STAR CHARITY. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU?

We are so proud to have received such a high rating from Charity Navigator. We believe passionately in the work we do and it was great to see it recognized by an organization that works to provide a fair, unbiased look at charities nationwide.



Woods with  
Gwen Stefani  
at Tiger Jam



## HOW DOES THE FOUNDATION RAISE FUNDS?

Our funding comes from a variety of sources, including conducting five fundraising events, individual/corporate donations and grants. Our PGA TOUR golf tournaments are the *Deutsche Bank Championship*, a *FedEx Playoff* event in Boston, MA.; the *AT&T National*, held in Washington, D.C., and the *Northwestern Mutual World Challenge* in Thousand Oaks, CA. In addition to our tournaments, we operate the *Tiger Woods Invitational*, a private golf event held on the Monterey Peninsula and *Tiger Jam*, an annual benefit concert held in Las Vegas.

## HOW DID YOU FIRST MEET TIGER?

I first got to know Tiger at the 1992 LA Open. I was then the tournament director for the Los Angeles Open at Riviera Country Club. We awarded Tiger his first ever exemption to play in a professional tournament at age 16. Through that, I got to know him, his father Earl and mother Tida

and really enjoyed our relationship, which grew over time. I was honored in 1999 when the Woods family asked me to come and help grow their organization.

## WHAT'S IT LIKE TO GOLF WITH THE WORLD'S NUMBER-ONE RANKED PLAYER?

I have had the opportunity to play with Tiger many times over the years dating back to 1991 and there are many things that I recall from our rounds. His focus during every golf shot is the same whether it's #18 on Sunday at the Masters or playing a casual round with me.

## YOUR HANDICAP IS A 13. HOW OFTEN DO YOU PLAY THE LOCAL COURSES?

My opportunities to play golf fluctuate depending on my schedule as I travel 65 percent of the time domestically and internationally. When I am in Southern California, I play all of my golf at Pelican Hill®.

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE HOLE AT PELICAN HILL?

The South Course is my favorite 18 holes of the Tom Fazio layout. Holes #11, #12 and #13 could be the three prettiest holes in California.

## YOU'RE ORIGINALLY FROM THE HOME OF THE *BIG RED MACHINE*, DOES YOUR HEART BELONG TO THE FIELD OR THE LINKS?

Baseball. I grew up next door to Joe Nuxhall who was the youngest player to enter a major league baseball game in 1944 at age 15. Joe retired after 16 years in the major leagues and enjoyed a 40-year career as the Red's radio play-by-play announcer until his death in 2007. Joe was a surrogate father, mentor and friend to me. ☺