



**RENEE POWELL, PGA/LPGA
PGA Head Professional/Member, PGA Hall of Fame
Clearview Golf Club – East Canton, Ohio**

Birth Date: May 4, 1946
Residence: East Canton,
Ohio
Turned Professional: 1967
LPGA Membership: 1967
PGA Membership: 1996

Professional golfer and educator Renee Powell is one of only eight African-American women to compete on the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour.

She is the first woman of color to be elected to membership in the PGA of America and in 2015, achieved another historic milestone. Powell was named one of seven women as Honorary Members of the 260-year-old Royal & Ancient Golf Club in St. Andrews, Scotland.

Renee is the daughter of the late William Powell, the only African-American to design, build, own, and operate a golf course. Mr. Powell was inducted posthumously March 12, 2013, into the PGA of America Hall of Fame and Renee was inducted on Nov. 7, 2017 – the only father-daughter combination to receive the PGA’s highest lifetime honor.

Renee Powell’s inherited her father’s ability to connect with diverse communities, including founding Clearview HOPE (Helping Our Patriots Everywhere) in 2011, an outgrowth of PGA HOPE and sanctioned by the Veterans Administration.

Clearview HOPE is the sole year-round and cost-free women's military rehabilitative golf program in the country. The program currently serves nearly 60 female veterans from throughout Northern Ohio.

From Northern Ohio and Around the World

Renee Powell was introduced to golf at age 3 by her father, William, a PGA Life Member and the 2009 PGA Distinguished Service Award recipient. She entered her first amateur tournament at age 12 and won her division. Three years later, she had 30 youth tournament trophies.

Powell graduated from Central Catholic High School in Canton in 1964 and attended Ohio University and The Ohio State University, serving as captain of the women's golf team at each institution.

Powell made her professional debut on the LPGA Tour in 1967, and her first tournament was the U.S. Women's Open. She competed in 250 professional golf tournaments and won the 1973 Kelly Springfield Open in Brisbane, Australia, posting a final-round 67 to set a course record.

Powell was chosen to represent the United States in the U.S. vs. Japan Team Matches on four separate occasions during the 1970's. Team members included such notables as Kathy Whitworth, Carol Mann, Pat Bradley, Sandra Post, Donna Caponi-Byrnes and Susie Berning. In each of Renee's four matches, her team won.

Powell was invited to participate in King Hassan's Tournament in Morocco and was the only American golf professional to play in President Jawara's Tournament in Gambia. Even President Kaunda of Zambia personally invited Renee to play with him at the State House Golf Course, the first woman golfer to do so.

During the 1970's Renee was part of the USO Tour to Vietnam. Joined by her friend, Mary Lou Daniel (Crocker), and one-armed trick-shot artist, Jimmy Nichols, they gave golf clinics in hopes of bringing "a little bit of home" to our troops abroad.

In 1979, Powell made history by becoming the first woman to be named Head Professional at a golf course in the United Kingdom - Silvermere, an hour southwest of London. At that same time, she wrote another piece of history in England by competing with men in a professional event from the same set of tees.

While in England, Renee began designing and promoting golf, tennis, and jogging clothes for McCarthy Sports of London. Harrod's of London was the first store to purchase the line and did a front window display of Renee's design. She also wrote instructional articles for Par Golf Magazine.

In 1980, Powell finished her Tour career and taught golf in Africa and Europe and later returned home to Canton where she currently serves as the head professional golfer at Clearview Golf Club. In 2001, Clearview Golf Club was named to the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Powell has made twenty-five trips to Africa, serving as a goodwill ambassador of the game of golf.

Her community outreach in her hometown resulted in Powell being invited in 2016 to serve on the Board of Directors of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Additionally, Powell also was named to the Centennial Committee of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, which celebrates a century in 2020.

The Powell family established the Clearview Legacy Foundation 501 (c) 3 for education, preservation and turf grass research. In 2003, Renee Powell was the recipient of the PGA First Lady of Golf Award.

Inspiration from a Pioneering Parent

Only eight African-American women have ever played for the Ladies' Professional Golf Association since its inception in 1950. Of those, only Renee Powell was the only player among the group to become a dual member of the LPGA and the PGA of America.

Powell played the game of golf during a period of civil rights unrest in American history when not only was it difficult for a woman to gain respect in the sport, but also during a time when it was almost impossible for African-Americans to even become accepted to a professional golf organization.

Renee Powell's pathway to public service through golf began with the courageous influence of her father, Dr. William J. Powell. Renee was the only daughter of William J. and Marcella Powell, and she was immersed in the game of golf long before she could hold a club.

Shortly after she was born, her father had already begun to design and build his own course on the dairy farm he owned in East Canton, Ohio. William Powell formed the first golf team at Historically Black College – Wilberforce University in 1937, and attempted to continue to play the game of golf. However, he found it difficult to gain admittance to public courses, for most had an "all-white" policy.

So, William Powell decided to design and build his own golf course in East Canton that would be open to all players regardless of race, color, ethnic origin. Clearview Golf Club, where Mr. Powell said, "the only color that matters are the color of the greens," is truly America's Course. It was with that powerful example set by her father, that Renee Powell ultimately found an unquenchable passion in golf.

In 1949, Powell was already being taught how to play the game of golf even though she was only three years old. Powell spent the next nine years playing golf at the Clearview Golf Club, improving her game and slowly growing up. It wasn't until she was 12 years old that she entered her first tournament, and to the surprise of many in the crowd, she won.

By the time she was 15, the crowd was no longer stunned by the amateur Powell, for she had won more than thirty trophies in the amateur league, and had been featured in Ebony and Sports Illustrated. Instead, Powell had a bigger rooting section than merely her parents, who often had to fight to get Powell into different tournaments where she was the only African-American player.

By 1967, Powell had competed in over 100 amateur golf tournaments and she had served as the captain of the Ohio State University Ladies Golf Team. Both she and her parents felt that she was finally ready to go professional. But this was not the easy choice it should have been for a woman of Powell's talents. Powell was the second African-American woman to compete on the LPGA Tour. Her predecessor, former tennis Grand Slam champion Althea Gibson, competed on Tour through 1978.

There also was the issue of sponsorship to contend with, for it was expensive to join the Ladies' Professional Golf Association as well as maintain all the fees that went along with membership. Powell didn't let any of this stop her however, and for the first time, on June 28, 1967, stepped onto the tee as a professional golfer.

Civil Rights & Competing on Tour

Powell's introduction to the LPGA could not have come in a more hostile environment. Civil rights tensions that had been slowly rising throughout the 1960s were coming to a head and the issues of discrimination and violence against African-Americans spread to all facets of life including sports. In a piece appearing on www.pgatour.com, Powell remembered, "There were a lot of problems in the country at that time. And here I was a black girl, traveling with a tour, at a time when they were still lynching people in the South. I had the security blanket of my parents, but when I got out, I didn't have that anymore. Not when I would go into a restaurant and was refused accommodations. I was a player, but this was something white players didn't have to go through."

In an interview with Contemporary Black Biography, Powell recalled relying upon her faith while traveling in the South. "I remember crossing the Vicksburg Bridge, traveling through Selma, Alabama. Thinking about those difficult times and the things that could have happened to me while I was traveling. I was lucky to be alive. It was the strength of God. I was doing what he wanted me to do. I was there for a reason." The other thing that kept Powell strong during these moments was her parents and her siblings who tried to attend as many of the events on Tour as they could. Powell's father especially knew what she was going through and made sure to keep in contact with his daughter whenever possible.

While Powell never won an LPGA Tour event during her 13 years on the tour, this did not stop her from making a tremendous impact on the game of golf. Merely being on the tour and visible at the tournaments, she continued to break the barrier that Gibson had broken 18 years earlier.

Powell recorded her lone professional title in the 1973 Kelly Springfield Open in Australia. In the 1980 Rail Charity Classic, she recorded a hole-in-one on the second hole. Even though her days playing professional golf were nearing a close, Powell was not ready to lay down her clubs and leave the course.

As a Worldwide Golf Ambassador

After retiring from LPGA Tour competition in 1980, Powell decided to start traveling. She so loved the game of golf that she wanted to bring it to parts of the world that had never been exposed to the sport or places where very few people had the

opportunity to play. Powell brought her enthusiasm about golf to Africa in 1981, and a deep professionalism. Her sincerity was clearly recognized by African officials. While there she helped Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda improve his game and also played in a foursome with Gambian President Sir Dawda Jawara and his two wives. The next year, she was invited back to Africa by the United States Information Agency to teach the game to women.

Over the next 15 years, Powell would achieve an even larger public role in golf. She took up broadcasting for ABC and CBS sports, covering different events on both the PGA and LPGA circuits. She would also continue to play in tournaments around the world as well as introduce and teach the game of golf to any country or continent she visited.

She returned to Africa numerous times after 1981, each time conducting more clinics and networking with dignitaries. Her clinics mainly focused in on women golfers, but Powell was happy to share her expertise with any person who was serious about learning how to play the game.

Other countries such as Japan, Australia, Morocco, Spain, and England all received visits from Powell and her golf clinics aimed at educating women in the ways of golf.

Promoting Higher Education

Another interest of Powell's during the 1980s was promoting golf at black colleges both in the United States as well as internationally. She would hold many lectures and golf clinics at predominantly black colleges hoping to get older teenagers and young adults interested in the game. She took that same idea and sculpted it into youth golf leagues, open to anyone, but mainly targeted to minority communities where golf had little or no exposure. Realizing that starting golf at an early age benefited her, Powell began her own youth clinic.

In 1995, the Renee Powell Youth Golf Camp Cadre Program was launched. Supported by the PGA of America and conducted with the assistance of Baldwin-Wallace College, Cleveland City Schools and the City of Cleveland, Powell's goals were to give inner-city junior high school students an opportunity to learn to play the game of golf. Over the years, Powell's program continues to open doors to children of all backgrounds and nationalities and has become the premier golf camp for youths in the United States.

The Renee Powell Youth Golf Camp Cadre Program was so successful, the PGA Foundation (today's PGA REACH) used it as a model for other youth golf programs, including The First Tee, which is dedicated to creating three-hole playing facilities for junior golfers in Louisville, Kentucky.

Extending the Clearview Legacy

In the pre-Tiger Woods era, Powell's efforts were groundbreaking. "What I enjoy most is working with people who want to learn," Powell said. "My biggest job is to

carry on what has been put before me. I am here to create a level playing field, create opportunities for everyone. I want to grow the game of golf, let people know it's open to everyone. If I can create opportunities for people to walk through this door, I've done my job," Powell has expressed openly that she is happy that she can use her status to promote the game of golf as well as healthy living and good morals. She notes, however, that one not need be famous to offer a helping hand. "Everybody has a responsibility," she told *CBB*. "Everyone can contribute to the world, whether it's with a neighbor, to the church, or even with a younger sibling. You don't have to be a prominent person to contribute. Everyone has an obligation to be a good example."

The Renee Powell/Clearview Golf Cadre Program will be relaunched in 2019 in the Canton area and incorporate inner-city and rural students.

For Powell, playing and promoting golf has been her entire life. She has been doing so since she was a child and continued into adulthood. Through her efforts, the game has been shown to a legion of people who otherwise it might not have been exposed to it. And in the process, she never lost her focus.

"God has blessed everyone with certain talent and abilities," Powell said on CBB. "Set goals. Figure out what you want to do. My parents always said to leave the world in better shape than when you found it. Using that talent and those abilities you have to try to do that, make the world a better place."

Renee Powell Honors

- 1989 Inductee, Ohio Women's Hall of Fame
- 1990 Inductee, Stark County YWCA Hall of Fame
- 1991 Recipient, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drum Major for Justice Award (presented by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference)
- 1992 National Golf Foundation - Jack Nicklaus Golf Family of the Year
- 1995 100% Wrong Club - Hall of Fame Award
(recognizing athletes, community leaders, pioneers in sports & social justice)
- 1998 Card Walker Award - PGA Tour

Woodholme Foundation Legend Award
- 1999 Budget Service Award (presented by LPGA and Club Professional Division)

Honorary Member, LPGA Teaching and Club Professional Division

Trailblazer Award for Junior Golf - Urban Youth Golf Program
Louisville/Jefferson, County, Kentucky
- 2001 Unsung Hero Award - Congressional Black Caucus Spouses
- 2002 Recipient, Executive Women's Golf Association Leadership Award

- 2002-08 Black Women in Sports Foundation - Legend Award
- 2003 PGA First Lady of Golf Award – presented by the PGA of America
 Inductee, Northern Ohio PGA Hall of Fame (*first female member*)
 African American Sports Hall of Fame - Trailblazer Award
 Mercedes-Benz Legends of Women’s Golf Award
 The Big O Classic – Recognition Award (sponsored by Oscar Robertson)
- 2004 W.O. Walker, Call & Post Newspaper - Community Excellence Award
 Metropolitan Golf Writers Association Family of the Year Award
- 2006 Inductee, National Black Golf Hall of Fame
- 2007 – William and Renee Powell, Inductees, Ohio Golf Hall of Fame
 LPGA Rolex for the Love of the Game Award
 Inductee, African American Golfers Hall of Fame
- 2008 – Honorary Doctor of Laws (L.L.D.), University of St. Andrews
(First female golfer honored in 600-year history of Scottish institution)
- 2009 – Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce Community Salute Award
 (for Clearview Golf Club)
 Trainor Award (Duramed FUTURES Tour)
- 2010 Top 50 Female Teaching Professionals, *Golf Digest*
 Honorary Doctor of Public Service, University of Maryland Eastern Shore
 Making A Difference Sarah Care Way Award
- 2012 ATHENA International Leadership Award
(honoring career of community outreach)
 Walsh University Founders Award
 Top 50 Female Teaching Professionals, *Golf Digest* (Ranked No. 10)
- 2013 Inductee, Stark County Amateur Golf Hall of Fame

- Diversity Initiative Award (*presented by Coming Together Stark County, honoring Clearview HOPE, serving women veterans through golf*)
- 2014 Original Tee Golf Classic – True Original Award
Pioneers of the LPGA Award, LPGA Founders Cup
(*Honored with Kathy Whitworth*)
- 2015 Ike Grainger Award, United States Golf Association
(*In recognition of 25 years of volunteer service to the USGA*)
- Honorary Member, Royal & Ancient Golf Club, St. Andrews, Scotland
(*One of seven women to become first female members in the 260-year-old history of the R&A Golf Club*)
- 2016 Recipient, Women of Power Legacy Award. *Presented by BLACK ENTERPRISE, Hollywood, Florida*
- Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame David E. Aldstadt Service Award
- The Renee Powell Cup established – Women’s Golf Team play inaugural at the University of St. Andrews
- 2017 Inductee, PGA of America Hall of Fame
- Inductee, Ohio High School Athletic Association Circle of Champions
- Special Award of Distinction, Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes – Ohio Award named for Renee Powell
- 2018 Stark County Elementary School Alumni Award
- Inductee, Ohio Civil Rights Commission Hall of Fame
(*co-inductee with her late father, William*)
- Dedication - Renee Powell Hall
University of St. Andrews, Scotland (*first American so honored in the 600-plus year history of the institution*)
- 2019 Co-recipient, Old Tom Morris Award (*with brother Larry Powell*)
Honoring the William Powell family; highest annual honor of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

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