

# Retired golf pro wri

"I couldn't have been more surprised to see someone than I was to see Lee Olson in my creative writing class at the Center for Lifelong Learning at UTEP. The last time I had seen Lee was when he was the pro at Dos Lagos Golf Course in Anthony, N.M. I found out that he is retired and writing a book on the history of golf in New Mexico.



Olson

Lee, born in 1926 in Detroit Lakes, Minn., was active in all sports while in high school. "In 1942 my parents moved to Socorro, N.M. and I graduated from Socorro High. However, Socorro did not have full college accreditation, so I went back to Detroit Lakes and spent a half year in high school, and graduated once again so I could attend college.

"I had enlisted in the Navy before graduation, and that night, after graduation, I left for boot camp in Farraget, Idaho. I spent most of my active duty through 1946 on a (Landing Ship Tank) based in New Orleans.

After World War II Lee got his B.A. in journalism at the University of New Mexico, and while there played on the golf team and worked in the pro shops of the university's two golf courses.

The UNM team won the Skyline Conference Championship every year that Lee was on the team, and he got to play in the 1949 NCAA National Tournament.

After college, Lee stayed on and worked full time at the UNM golf courses.

"In 1952 I became the assistant pro at the Wig Wam Golf Course Resort in Phoenix. During the three years at Wig Wam, I learned a great deal from the pro, Red Allen."

Allen's daughter, Ona, "was attending Arizona University in Tucson. I was living with the Allens. Ona came home that Thanksgiving and found me asleep in her bed. That's how we met.

In 1953, Lee and Ona were married.

Lee's professional career includes a year and a half in Tucson and 12 years in Socorro at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology Golf Course (1956-1968). Their daughter, September, is 37 and now getting her teaching certificate at UTEP. They also have two boys, Mike, 35, and Russell, 34.

In 1968 the Olsons moved to Anthony, N.M., where Lee was pro at Dos Lagos for 14 years. Now, his son, Mike, and Pepe Gallegos are partners in the golf shop and share the duties as pro.

"Pepe's dad was greenskeeper when I first came to work as pro, and Pepe and Mike would pick up practice balls, and fish them out of the lakes when they were 10 years old. When Mike, Pepe and my youngest son, Russell, were on the Gadsden High School golf team, they won the state high school team championship.

"Now my son, Mike, is pro; and the builder of Dos Lagos, Sam Gillette's, son, Ron, is the owner. My son, Russell, works for GTE."

Lee Olson and Lee Trevino won the Section PGA Pro-Pro Championship in 1966 in Socorro. In 1968 they were leading the tournament after the first round in Roswell, but they played in a snowstorm the final round and lost. Lee won that tournament again in 1969 in Truth or Consequences with Don Klein.

"That's a funny story. We won that tournament on the second



Irv Prell

playoff hole. I pitched to within three feet of the cup. A sure thing for a birdie. Well, I missed it, and my partner had to sink a 30-foot put to win it for us."

Irv Prell writes about West Side people for the El Paso Times.

