

McKeown Golf Classic tees off

By Mischa Aaron Arnosky

Features Editor

Joseph McKeown worked with his father for most of his life. His father, William McKeown Jr., was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 1986, and died five years later. Since then, McKeown has continued to work in honor of his father by raising more than \$2 million to support Alzheimer's research and care through The McKeown Foundation.

Most of the proceeds come from an annual golf outing, The William J. McKeown Jr. Golf Classic "Fore" Alzheimer's. The 19th installment of the tournament will take place May 10 at Commonwealth National Golf Club in Horsham.

In the weeks prior to the event, McKeown, of Dresher, tends to two mobile phones, as well as a maxed-out inbox. On the desk of his office are several folders with tabs that read "McKeown Foundation," and in a small container on the floor of his office, McKeown keeps all of the newspaper clippings that mention his golf outing, dating back to the early '90s. He also keeps all the photographs of prior outings. And though they're not time-stamped, the haircuts, facial hair and clothes of the participants indicate that the photos may be from the first couple of tournaments.

"This is a passion that I have," he said. "I

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GOLF from the cover

enjoy it very much, and it takes a lot of time. The last four to five weeks is like crunch time for me — I want everything to be perfect.”

McKeown said his father's death was very traumatic for his family. One of six siblings, McKeown worked with his father in his deli and beverage business on Rising Sun Avenue in Northeast Philadelphia. The business has since been sold, but there's still a long block on Rising Sun Avenue called McKeown Plaza.

“Over time, you could tell that he was just slipping,” McKeown said. “And then came the point where he retired, and unfortunately, not long after that, he was becoming too much for my mom, and we had to put him into a home.”

McKeown's brother Charlie came up with the idea to hold a charity golf outing to honor his father and to benefit Alzheimer's research, though no one in their family spends too much time on the links.

“We all thought it was a great idea, and here we are today — 19 years later,” McKeown said. “We're really not big golfers, and that's the funny thing. But we've really made it a memorable event. People take the day off and enjoy themselves, and a lot of people talk about the past.”

Formerly the vice president of sales and development at a local car dealership, McKeown landed a new job about six months ago — a job that will likely benefit his foundation. He's now an account executive with University of Pennsylvania Medicine. When his boss heard of McKeown's foundation, she had him meet with two of the country's most prominent Alzheimer's researchers, Dr. John Trojanowski and Dr. Virginia Lee, both of whom are professors of pathology and laboratory medicine at the university. And both will speak about Alzheimer's research at a dinner following the golf tournament.

McKeown's foundation accepts grant proposals from nonprofits that are in concert with his mission of Alzheimer's care, research and education. The foundation recently donated to Christ's Home Retirement Community in Warminster, the



Photos courtesy of Joseph McKeown

Top, sports talk show host Mike Missanelli, left, joins Joseph McKeown at a prior William J. McKeown Jr. Golf Classic to benefit Alzheimer's research and care. Above, McKeown acts as an auctioneer for sports memorabilia to benefit The McKeown Foundation.

Delaware Valley chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and St. Joseph's Manor's dementia unit.

On The McKeown Foundation's committee members, McKeown said, “[The position] is very time consuming. They're all trying to do this out of their busy lives — but we all have a passion, and we all want to make a difference.”

The 19th annual William J. McKeown Jr. Golf Classic take place May 10 at Commonwealth National Golf Club, 250 Babylon Road, Horsham. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m., followed by a shotgun tee-off at 11 a.m. Dinner will begin at 4:15 p.m. The cost is \$325 per person, and there are individual and corporate sponsorship packages ranging from \$1,750 to \$7,500.

For more information or to register, call Joseph McKeown at 215-669-7999 or visit mckeowngolfclassic.com.