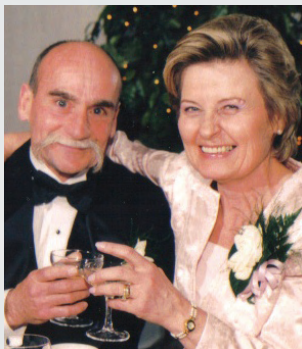


Making a Tradition:

Annual Golf Tournament

a Family Affair



Now in its fourth year, the Stevan Downey Memorial Golf Tournament has become part of the annual routine of the Downey family of Lynn, MA. Held every August, the event raises

funds for the International Mesothelioma Program (IMP) – more than \$93,000 thus far.

Stevan Downey was a member of the Lynn Police Department, rising from the ranks of patrolman to lieutenant in his 26 years with the force. He was a U.S. Marine who served in Vietnam. He was a husband, father of four children, and grandfather of five. He was devoted to his family, his work, and his Harley-Davidson. He was 58 years old when he died, five months after hearing the diagnosis of mesothelioma.

Daughter Kristen got the family thinking about what it could do to celebrate and remember Stevan's life. Son Chris said, "My sister gave me two choices – a road race or a golf tournament. Ultimately, I picked the golf tournament, mostly because I golf and have played in many similar events over the years. And I have a friend who organizes a tournament to benefit Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Finally, I thought a golf tournament would probably be easier to plan and organize, while maximizing the amount of money we could raise."

The first event, in 2005, was a lot of work for the Downey family and their friends. Chris got some guidance by volunteering to help with his friend's tournament earlier that year. The Brigham and Women's Hospital Development Office put him in touch with another donor who had organized a golf tournament, and Chris got tips from him. "But mostly, it was a 'learn by doing' experience," he said. "We

divided up the main tasks. Kristen was responsible for getting cash or product donations from sponsors to enable us to hold a raffle and silent auction. I was responsible for bringing in the golfers."

It sounds simple, but each step involved scores of details initially – everything from developing a packet of materials to attract sponsors to creating a logo to



(Above) Stevan and Carolyn Downey

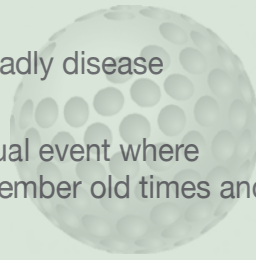
(Left) Jason, Kevin, Alan (Stevan's twin brother), and Brian Downey make a family foursome.

(Far Right) Tournament directors Kristen Hamilton and Chris Downey

Downey Tournament Goals

The Stevan E. Downey Memorial Golf Tournament focuses on three key priorities:

1. to raise money for the International Mesothelioma Program at Brigham and Women's Hospital
2. to raise awareness about the relatively unknown and deadly disease mesothelioma
3. to honor the life of Steve Downey by creating a fun annual event where family and friends, both old and new, can gather to remember old times and create new and lasting memories.



making a spreadsheet to register teams and collect fees. The few days before the tournament were filled with last-minute details, such as getting sponsorship signs printed,

stuffing player goody bags, and reviewing tasks with the two dozen volunteers needed. Despite some first-year jitters (and more than a few sleepless nights), the 2005 tournament was a big success, bringing in more than \$23,000 for the IMP.

Since then, organizing the tournament each year has gotten "easier and easier, now that we have our systems in place," said Chris. One valuable lesson learned was to work with a golf course that has experience in such tournaments. "Finding the right course and the right golf pro can make the whole event – particularly tournament day – much less hectic," he said. "It's a lot of simple things, really, like keeping the scores and putting the hole-sponsorship signs out on the course for us."

The event accommodated 200 golfers in 2008, many of whom were police officers and firefighters. "My sister Katy is now a State Trooper," said Chris, "so that's another audience for us."

As expected, the highlight of the day for most participants is a round of golf, but the attendees also understand the purpose behind the event. "Now, people know what they are coming out to support, where most had never even heard of mesothelioma before," said Chris. "They want to hear a bit about my dad, and they are touched by hearing about the challenges and triumphs in the fight against the disease." A part of the dinner program each year includes remarks by a mesothelioma survivor. For the past couple of years, that has been Mike Dews (see profile on page 42), who is an avid golfer. "Mike is out there playing the course – last year, his team came in third! – then gives his talk," said Chris. "It's inspiring, and makes quite an impression."

He added that the annual event has become such a tradition that "we couldn't stop now if we wanted to. The tournament is the main topic of conversation whenever family or friends see us – 'when's the tournament this year?' and 'how's the planning going?' It's like I have no identity of my own any more. But that's fine with me. I enjoy helping organize it, and it means a lot to me and my family. Dr. Sugarbaker and his staff have supported us all along – they showed the same concern for my dad when he was a patient as they do now about coming out for the event. We totally believe in these people." ■