



Statement from Ernie Els

First of all, I want to thank the team at the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund for this honor. Like most golfers, I know the incredible story of Francis Ouimet, a poor 20-year old local caddie who beat two of the game's greatest players in a playoff to win the 1913 US Open. It probably is the greatest upset in the history of all sports.

Mr Ouimet then went on to achieve great things off the golf course. He was a true gentleman, a kind man who never forgot his humble roots. So this scholarship is a fitting legacy - golf changed his life and this fund in his name does the same thing, providing opportunities for young people to obtain a college education. It's something we're passionate about too and, indeed, it's the cornerstone of our work at the Ernie Els & Fancourt Foundation in South Africa. I congratulate the team at the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund on everything that they're doing.

So this award means a lot to me. And to be joining a roll call of past recipients that includes some of my own personal heroes such as Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Gary Player...well, that's the icing on the cake. Liezl and I are very much looking forward to the annual banquet in April; it sounds like it's going to be a special evening.

Thank you again.

- Ernie Els