

# Driving FOR THE Green

The little plaid golf bag was just about ugliest thing in the world, but to an eight-year-old Ron Cherney, it was a big deal -- his first set of clubs, a gift from his father. The golf course near the Cherneys' home in Toronto, Canada would become Ron's summertime playground, where he and the other neighborhood kids played round after round. For fifty-five cents, you could play all day.

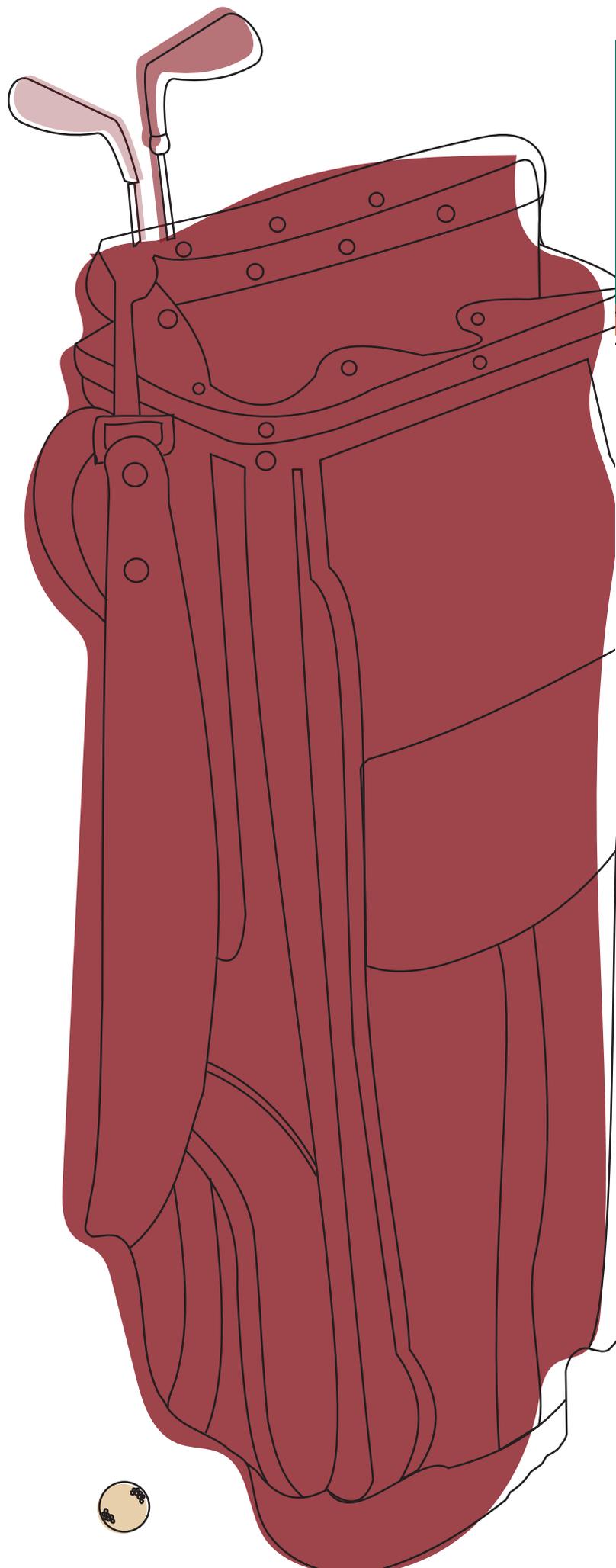
Now 70, Ron's love of golf hasn't waned. For him, it's not just a sport, but a vehicle for philanthropy. A passionate supporter of Tower, Ron is the Chair of the Jack Mishkin Memorial Golf Classic, which is now in its fifth year.

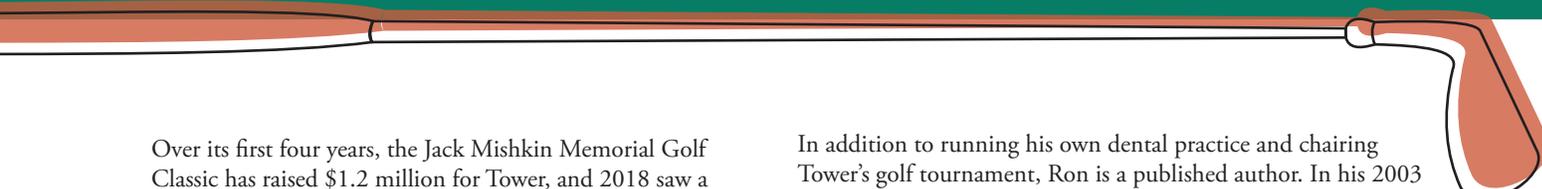
Ron first learned of Tower when his sister-in-law was diagnosed with breast cancer twenty years ago and sought help. He also had a friend at Tower in Jan Rosen, whom he'd known for years. "Jan's a golf nut, and so am I, so when he told me five years ago that he wanted to start up a golf tournament, I was thrilled," he says. Ron, Jan, and Nancy Mishkin, whose late husband the tournament is named after, got the ball rolling.

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Ron has no qualms about picking up the phone and asking people for money. In fact, he loves doing it, because it's for a cause he believes in deeply. "It doesn't feel like work to me," he says. "Cancer is something that affects most of us, whether directly or indirectly through our friends and family."

In 1981, Ron was one of those directly affected. Doctors detected a sarcoma, a rare type of cancer which arises in the bones and connective tissues. He was lucky - after three surgeries, the cancer was completely eliminated, and he has been cancer-free since.





Over its first four years, the Jack Mishkin Memorial Golf Classic has raised \$1.2 million for Tower, and 2018 saw a record-breaking \$330,000 raised. Ron is quick to attribute the success of the tournament to his committee, with whom he loves working. “It’s such a great group of people; the tournament almost runs itself now,” he says.

Ron is a dentist by trade, with over 45 years of practice under his belt, but that wasn’t always the plan. After earning his master’s degree in engineering from UCLA, Ron took a job at a company in Burbank. “I had a little cubicle where I had to draft things, and I didn’t see a soul all day - I just drew pictures,” he says. After two months there, Ron knew engineering wasn’t for him. He was more suited for a career that involved helping others in a more direct way. So he went back to school at USC to study dentistry and later started working with his father-in-law. Ron’s San Fernando practice has thrived in the years since.

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“I’m very fortunate,” he muses, “I’ve been a dentist for 45 years, and I still enjoy it. I have nice patients and a staff that’s been with me for over 35 years. It has afforded me the free time to work on things like the golf tournament.”

Ron is married to Lisa Meyer, a prominent family law attorney who is equally passionate about Tower. “Tower means so much to us both.” Ron and Lisa have three grandchildren, whom they say are the focus of their lives. “We spend our weekends trying to convince them to see us,” Ron chuckles. “It’s a lot of fun when we get to!”

In addition to running his own dental practice and chairing Tower’s golf tournament, Ron is a published author. In his 2003 book, *My Greatest Shot*, Ron wrote letters to golf greats, both men and women, asking them about the best shot they had ever hit. Over 130 responses poured in, including letters from Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, and Tiger Woods, and Ron compiled them into a book that also features interviews with the golfers.

While on vacation in Mexico with Lisa, Ron was inspired to write a book for his grandchildren. He was walking across a cove when he noticed a little black speck in the sand. Upon closer inspection, he realized that the speck was a tiny turtle, trying to make its way to the sea. After helping the turtle along its way, Ron was struck by the idea to write a story featuring his oldest granddaughter, Layla, who befriends the turtle. Ron’s stories, whether for children or adults, tend to share certain moral lessons at their core, about persistence, determination, and being good to one another.

Reflecting on the feeling he gets on the golf course, surrounded by friends and supporting a cause so close to his heart, Ron says, “It’s all about the camaraderie. Chairing the tournament and raising money for Tower is a labor of love. I’m so fortunate to be in this position.”

