

Calvin Peete Dead at Age 71

African American Golfers Digest
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African American golf great Calvin Peete died earlier this morning, April 29, in Atlanta. Peete was 71-years old, according to WSB-TV in Atlanta.

Memorial service details are below.

Peete was born in Detroit, Michigan on July 18, 1943, as the eighth of nine children. The son of an auto factory worker, Peete went on to become the most successful black golfer on the PGA Tour—before the career of Tiger Woods, gaining 12 PGA Tour wins. During his 20-year career on tour, he won four times, in 1982, finishing fourth on the money list that year. He also had two-win seasons in 1983, '85 and '86.

In 1983 and '85 he was a member of the Ryder Cup teams, earning a 4-2-1 mark. His skills also earned him the 1984 Vardon Trophy, given to the player with the lowest scoring average on the PGA Tour.

As a child, Peete fell from a cherry tree near his grandmother's house in Haiti, Missouri, and broke his left elbow in three places. It never set properly, yet he became one of the most accurate ball drivers in PGA Tour history. For 10 years, from 1981-1990, Peete led the Tour in driving accuracy. In 1983, he hit an astounding 84.55 percent of fairways in 87 PGA Tour rounds. Peete posted three top-four finishes in the majors, including a T-3 finish in the 1982 PGA, and T-4 efforts in the 1983 U.S. Open and 1984 PGA.

Peete graced the cover of the African American Golfer's Digest for the Winter 2006 edition, then showcasing his work at The First Tee of Jacksonville and his endorsement of Tournament Gifts of America (TGA) Charities as a Board Member.

"This is a tragic loss for the black golfing community and for the world," said publisher Debert Cook. "Calvin was a good friend and joined us several times for our programs and events, and, always was a classy gentleman with our many guests. Everybody absolutely adored meeting him and hearing his stories and tales about his glorious victories and life in golf. He will be sorely missed by us. I, my editors and writers and photographers all send our deep condolences to his family."

According to a quote that Peete gave to The History Makers several years ago, "In order to change, you first must make a difference."

According to Author Johnson, Peete's long-time friend and business manager of several years, Peete was admitted to an Atlanta-area hospital several weeks ago and was in intensive care. He was released two weeks ago. Not faring well, he was admitted to a hospice a week-and-a-half ago. This morning the golf legend succumbed from having double cancers: lung and pancreatic. "Our friendship goes back over 40-years," said Johnson tearfully over the telephone when reached by this publication.

Peete's son, Calvin Peete Jr., has been receiving numerous messages of sympathy on his Facebook page, through which he responded earlier today, "I'm not at all certain that I should be trying to express my feelings, regarding the loss of dad, in the midst of my grief, but I feel compelled to let all of you know that I do see your kind words and I recognize your numbers on my phone; I'm just not able to make it through a conversation without falling to pieces right now, sorry."

He is survived by his wife, Pepper, and seven children. Murray Brothers Funeral Home in Atlanta is handling funeral arrangements, but says there will be no services held in Atlanta.

The Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, May 16 at 11:00 a.m. at the Impact Church located at 8985 Lone Star Road, Jacksonville, Fla. 32211. Telephone: 877-772-9436