

New KET documentary shines light on Lexington golf phenom Marion Miley

While her legacy has faded with the passing of time, in 1930s America, Lexington golfer Marion Miley was at the top of her sport. Her name was known nationwide – by both golf devotees and non-players alike. Tragically, her career was cut short when she was murdered during a burglary at the Lexington Country Club in September 1941.

KET's new documentary ***Forgotten Fame: The Marion Miley Story*** commemorates the 75th anniversary of her death at age 27, while detailing her pioneering work as one of the best female amateur golfers in the history of the game. The documentary premieres Thursday, Sept 29 at 8/7 pm on KET. It will also air Sunday, Oct. 2 at 9/8 pm on KET2. Following its Sept. 29 premiere, the program will also be available for online streaming at KET.org.

Called the “Flower of the Fairway” and noted for her undeniable athletic talent as well as her charming good looks, Miley's popularity in the national media was enhanced by the lack of top-tier professional male golfers during the Depression years.

In 1931, at age 17, Miley became the youngest woman ever to win Kentucky's state amateur golf championship, a title she would ultimately take a record six times. Winner of numerous regional tournaments across the country, Miley was also selected as a three-time member of the prestigious U.S. Curtis Cup team, which plays a British team biennially, considered one of golf's highest honors.

The documentary traces Miley's life as a childhood golf prodigy under the tutelage of her father, Fred – who moved his family to Lexington to accept the job as the golf pro at the Lexington Country Club – and charts her rise as one of the best female golfers the nation had seen, before her untimely death at the hands of armed robbers.

Miley's story is told via archival photos and newspaper accounts, snippets from her personal scrapbook and journals, re-enactments and insights by sources including Mike Trostel, senior historian with the USGA; Marion Miley biographer Beverly Bell; and several Lexington residents who knew Miley personally, including Ted Bassett, former

president of Keeneland; and Chester Wilson, a former caddy at the Lexington Country Club.

“Creating this documentary gave us the opportunity to really celebrate Marion Miley’s life which, because of her untimely death, was never really acknowledged or recognized,” said KET executive director Shae Hopkins. “Her achievements got lost in the sensational crime and in the wounded civic pride of a city that lost its hero.”

“People knew her name from the golf tournament named for her at the Lexington Country Club, and many older people remembered her, but that generation is passing away,” said Craig Cornwell, KET’s senior director of programming. “This was a way to resurrect her name and importance.”

Forgotten Fame: The Marion Miley Story is a KET production, funded in part by the KET Endowment for Kentucky Productions. Beth Kirchner is the writer, producer and director. Shae Hopkins and Craig Cornwell are executive producers.

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