



# Links Players

## THE LEGACY OF LEE ELDER

*A good person leaves an inheritance to his grandchildren. (Proverbs 13:22a, NASB)*

Lee Elder died November 28th, 2021. He will be remembered as the first African-American to play in the Masters in 1975. Among many other things, he left an enduring legacy by the way he responded to adversity. His life will be remembered for what he did on and off the golf course.

Robert Lee Elder was one of ten siblings. His dad died in World War II, and his mom died three months later. An orphan, Lee grew up with his aunt and then struck out on his own at the age of 16.

Then, in 1968 his unlikely pilgrimage began on the PGA Tour. Remember, it was not easy for an African-American in 1968, and he was not readily accepted by many of the galleries and fans. Yet, I can unmistakably say that he was accepted as a player by the other PGA Tour players.

I had the privilege of playing with Lee on many occasions, and I witnessed first-hand the adversity he faced. I saw his response up close and personal. I also saw how he conducted himself off the golf course with all the other players.

His conduct is still an inspiration to me. His good example led to massive changes for the better in our culture. I know we have more progress to make, but we have come a long way in the right direction since 1968. Just as Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball, Lee Elder spent his life breaking down barriers.

In the time of Jesus, it was the law that a citizen could be required to carry a Roman soldier's gear for one mile. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructs us in the better way. Jesus said, "Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two." (Matthew 5:41). Jesus continued, "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," (verse 44). "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?" he continued in verse 46.

The truth does not change. We just have a choice as to how we respond to this truth.

I don't pretend to know whether Lee Elder professed faith in Jesus Christ. What I do know is that Lee Elder exemplified Jesus' teaching to those who heckled him from outside the ropes. Our response, as believers, should also exemplify his teachings. The world will see a difference.

We should stand for what is right, but also humbly submit to go the extra mile. Our goal is not to win the argument or justify our behavior but to show the world that Jesus' teaching is different and life-changing. Jesus did not say it would be easy. He just said it would work.

**Prayer: Lord Jesus, grant us the strength to love the people who persecute us, just as You did. Our legacy will be a part of the reward You have promised.**

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Randy Wolff

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