

SPORTS

THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

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Event's theme: Big

JAYCEES STAGE CHARITY EVENT IN MEMORY OF SCHELLING

You might remember him as the tall guy who introduced the Champions Tour players at the first tee of the Farmers Charity Classic, or as the really high-five guy who was emcee at the Special Olympics



John Schelling

Michigan state basketball tournament. Or you might have been lucky enough to call John Schelling a friend. Schelling always stood out in a crowd. He was 6-foot-10 — most of it heart — and he always had two big willing hands to lend.

Big John died last summer of a heart attack at age 51, and left behind people who wanted to keep his spirit alive. Hence the "Big John Kahuna Classic" to benefit Special Olympics.

On the first wave of mailings, 70 golfers signed up immediately. A dozen of his family members are playing,



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GOLF

with some coming from as far as Arkansas.

It's \$125 per golfer in be part of the golf, lunch and dinner, and a few sponsorship opportunities remain available.

Amanda Schelling, Big John's widow and, like John, a former Grand Rapids Jaycees chairperson for the annual visit by the Senior touring pros, has worked closely with David Morgenstern and Brian Goudelock as well as other past chairs of the big event, to put on this event. The Jaycees are presenting this tournament, and donations are tax deductible.

"I just have to keep reminding everybody it's just a one-day thing, not a week-long event," Amanda said. "They all want to think so big."

The outing promises fun and prizes, and mostly fun just the

way Big John wanted his golf. The Crystal Springs Country Club member loved the game, but mostly loved to play it with people who had fun in mind.

"He would be proud to know we are doing something fun like this, making it go with a fun theme because he was called Big Kahuna, and yet helping a great cause he cared so much about," Amanda said. "He didn't do things to stand out, but he didn't mind being involved in something to help people. This is being done the way he would have done it."

Big John was a car salesman, a Wyoming police officer, a Jaycees president, a philanthropist and one of those easily remembered people. He had about a seven-foot wingspan, and a smile that seemed just as wide.

"You don't have to be a scratch golfer to play in this event, or be a golfer who remembers every shot, hole-by-hole," said Morgenstern. "All you need is the desire to benefit others in our community and the willingness

FACT SHEET

Big John Kahuna Classic

What: Charity golf scramble in memory of John Schelling

When: Monday, June 26

Where: Thornapple Pointe

Entry: \$125 per golfer

Web site: Enter at www.kahunaclassic.com

to have an enormous amount of fun at the same time."

Big John is missed. Champions Tour players asked about him soon after his death last year, and sent along condolences. His loyalty to the Jaycees and their charity work through golf was unsurpassed. He cared, and he proved it by pitching in to work.

Oh, and he loved to play the game, too.

"Tee it high and let it fly," he would tell his golf partners. Sounds like a plan.

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