



COLBERT HILLS

Jim Colbert

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Manhattan, Kansas [REDACTED]

The Honorable P. Kevin Castel  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
Daniel Patrick Moynihan  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Jim Colbert, and I am a retired golf professional from the PGA and Senior PGA Tours. I moved to Las Vegas in 1981 when I leased the city public golf course for 25 years. In attaining the lease, I promised the city my best effort to bring the PGA Tour back to Las Vegas.

I met Bill Walters during this time and he helped to coordinate this event so we would have the entire community involved. Bill's love of golf and strong commitment to the people of Las Vegas were essential to creating the first million-dollar charity golf tournament in the world in 1983.

Bill was a major contributor of both his time and money for the citizens of Las Vegas. As founders, Bill and I were responsible for finding the commercial sponsor for the tournament, and Panasonic became our original sponsor. We then needed to obtain 1000 amateurs at \$5,000 per person to support the base of the million dollar purse. The cost of a PGA tournament is usually 2-1/2 times the purse so we also needed many sub-tier commercial sponsors. Bill, myself, and eventually 1000 other founders would donate the remaining costs. Being new to the community, I needed a lot of help and introductions to meet the movers and shakers. With Bill's help we accomplished this base community effort. He had key contacts with all the hotels and local businesses and he believed that the PGA tour would be good for the community, so he helped connect us to all of the right people to make the tournament happen. In the end, we had 19 participating hotels and individuals working together. In 1983 we raised over one half million dollars for local charities. Over the years, that amount has increased to over one million dollars per event. The tournament was and still is a huge success—raising millions of dollars for the Las Vegas community.



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Not one penny of the proceeds from the tournament was spent on expenses. All time and effort was donated, so that the proceeds could all go to local charities. A special project that came out of the proceeds of our first tournament involved the donation of large medical equipment to local hospitals, as health care facilities in Las Vegas were greatly needed at the time. The tournament also raised enough money to endow scholarships for the men's and women's golf teams at UNLV. They remain competitive at the national level today.

Bill and his wife, Susan, introduced my wife and me to Opportunity Village—a facility for improving the lives of those with special needs. The residents there are given the opportunity to work and receive payment for their work. Opportunity Village has contracts with the Las Vegas airport, hotels, and other area businesses. It is the benchmark of this type of facility anywhere in the world. Bill and Susan are active participants at Opportunity Village, giving of both their time and financial support. It's easy to send a check to an organization, but time is much harder to give. They are called "Billy and Susan" by these residents because they are recognized and interact with them every time they visit. Bill inspired me to get involved and I now donate to Opportunity Village. I also attended the gala event the year that Bill and Susan were honored.

Bill and I also started the First Tee program in Las Vegas. First Tee is a program that teaches underserved children life skills through the sport of golf. Supporting organizations include the PGA Tour, PGA of America, LPGA, USGA, Golf Course Superintendents Association, Augusta National Golf Course, Club Managers Association and many other businesses across the country. The first person I approached to help start the Las Vegas chapter was Bill Walters. After looking into the program, he donated \$100,000 to kick-start it in Las Vegas, and he has also allowed First Tee to use his golf courses at no charge. Today the First Tee of Las Vegas is one of the largest and most successful in the country. Boys and girls ages 8-18 from all walks of life participate in the year-round program. I know that Bill has also been active in starting a chapter in the Palm Springs area and has both fundraised and helped mentor First Tee kids there.

Another very special program that Bill and Susan started is the non-kill Animal Shelter in Las Vegas. Las Vegas didn't have a non-kill shelter before the Walters got involved. They tried to drum up community support but when they didn't find enough interest, Bill and Susan decided to start it themselves. Now the shelter is #3 in the country. When Bill mentioned this to me, I introduced him to the Dean of the veterinary school at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. After speaking with the Dean, Bill and Susan donated \$250,000 to endow two annual scholarships. Graduating students who were given these scholarships were required to donate some of their time at the Las Vegas Shelter while starting their career.