

To All Members of The Waterfront:

For the past 7 days since we assumed operations of The Waterfront, we have been very busy. We expected nothing less. I have thought about the best way to introduce myself, either by mail, email, or some other way. In 2021, Email seems to be the best, even though I have no email address at the Club until next Tuesday. I have met a number of the Members on site and I have even been invited to play on Saturday mornings. I could not believe that on the night we closed, a Member reached out to me expressing his support for what the future will hold and wanted me to come out to join the Saturday morning game. I have also noticed that in the week since we have closed, the Pickleball players are out daily and it looks very exciting to me. I look forward to learning more about this game going forward.

I want to say that we plan on continuing to the Club as usual. Over the last week, I have been requested to speak to the Roanoke Times and Laker Magazine, both of which I did. Both publications inquired about whether changes would occur to the Club by way of its private nature. Let me stress, no changes are planned regarding membership for Club use. I desire to build off what the Willards created with the belief that we can improve the Club even more.

I have spent most of my life in the Roanoke Valley. I currently serve on the Roanoke Valley Golf Hall of Fame Board as the Vice President and Tournament Chairman, positions that I have occupied since 2018. I have played golf since the age of 12, or almost 40 years. The dream to get into golf has been something that I have sought for 10 years. I am thankful to the Willards for believing that I can carry on and improve that which they started in 1981, especially since I can keep all of the contacts of the people I know in surrounding areas and across the state.

On January 2, our first day being opened, Mark, our PGA Professional, informed me that he was going to accept another job outside of the golf world. Needless to say this caught me by surprise and I inquired with Mark if he could wait a few days to inform the Members, which he agreed. My first encounter with Mark was in 2007 I believe at a pro-am conducted at The Homestead. I think we even played together that day. When I came on board with the Hall of Fame in 2018, I stayed in contact with all the club pro's in the surrounding area including Mark. I have little doubt that Mark for the last 15 years did an outstanding job leading the golf portion of The Waterfront. I also want to state that in no way did I or the change in ownership expect or desire for Mark to leave. I truly wish Mark well as he faces a change for the first time in over 15 years when he departs us on the 23rd. The same qualifications that Mark has will be expected in the person that ultimately takes his place.

I have also been spending a good portion of time with Connie, our Club Manager. She and I spoke several times prior to the change and since then, she has been getting us up to speed daily. "Rome was not built in a day" as they say, but we will work every day to maintain that which is already in place and make improvements where they are needed. From the social functions, the dining, the golf merchandise, the pool, the pickleball, and the golf; rest assured that we desire to make The Waterfront the best it can absolutely be.

Sincerely,  
Darrell Craft