

Death of a pioneer

by Farrell Evans, ESPN

Barbara Douglas, former EWGA Board member and the first African-American chairman of the USGA's women's committee, died Saturday after a lengthy battle with ovarian cancer. A former IBM Executive, Douglas, 69, was a past president of the National Minority Golf Foundation and a member of the National Black Golf Hall of Fame.

I got to know Douglas when she was president of the National Minority Golf Foundation, which she was instrumental in developing initiatives that would increase diversity in the game. Above all things, she believed that the game would grow as its population grew to reflect society.

Before last year's Masters, the Golf Writers Association of America gave her the Ben Hogan Award, which honors a person for continuing to stay active in the game despite a physical handicap or illness.

"Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it," Douglas, who lived in the Phoenix area, told the golf writers. *"I would not let 'The Big C' control my life."*

She carried aspects of that mantra in all phases of her life. She never let her race or social circumstances keep her from the top rungs of IBM or from beating down the walls of the golf establishment.

In the end, she taught many of us that golf was more than just a game. For that gift, the game was forever enriched by her generous spirit.

Farrell Evans covers golf for ESPN and can be contacted at evans.espn@gmail.com.