For the past thirteen years, The Kent Finanger ’54 Golf Classic has been held each March at the Tuscany Golf Club at Pebble Creek at Goodyear, Arizona. The Golf Classic’s mission is to provide an enjoyable and memorable day for alumni and friends of Luther College.

Golfers get directions from Golf Pro Ronnie (L) prior to the start of the 18 hole four-person scramble. When all golfers are in their assigned golf carts (R), the staff at Tuscany leads each foursome to their respective tee box.

The golf classic celebrates Norse athletics with special emphasis on sporting achievements. The 2019 golf classic will celebrate the Norse Wrestling program. Past golf classics have celebrated Norse Cross Country, Track and Field, Baseball and fifty years of women’s sports at Luther College. Special recognition has been given to All American Athletes, Hall of Fame Athletes, IIAC Champions and the 1985 NCAA D3 Men’s Cross Country Championship Team.

From its humble beginnings thirteen years ago with 50 participants, the event has grown to involve thousands of participants, donors, sponsors, friends and alumni.
In the early years of “The Classic”, golfers were treated to home cooked meals at the home of Kent and Lois. The golfers going through the line are (L-R) : Lloyd Nelson, ’51, Mark Sundet, ’97, Stacy Sundet, ’01 and Dad, Bruce Sundet, ’68. The event was moved to the Tuscany Country Club as attendance continued to grow (right).

Sponsorships for the golf classic are given by individuals, families, businesses, current Luther College students and alumni. Contributions are dedicated to numerous aspects of the event, including live and silent auctions, raffles, the sponsorship of tees and greens. Special recognition goes to Lloyd Nelson ’51, who donated the sleeves of golf balls given to each of the 124 golfers at registration. All proceeds from the event benefit the Norse Athletic Association at Luther College.

Renae Hartl, Athletic Director and Paul Carlson, President, join Kent and fellow Norse football teammates for a half time presentation to the Norse football uniform fund, given through donations at the 2017 Golf Classic.

The 2018 event opened on Friday evening, March 23, with an evening prayer service attended by 98 persons. The prayer service was led by Reverend Charles Paulson ’59. The music was provided by soloist Jane (Peterson) Brambilla ’69 and pianist Linda (Ladd) Messer ‘64. The service was dedicated to the late Paul Solberg and the late President Elwin Farwell and Mrs. Helen Farwell.

Bob Naslund and Sherry Alcock presented dedications to the late Paul Solberg and the late President Elwin Farwell and Mrs. Helen Farwell.
Members of the Luther College administration and staff travel each year to Arizona to lend their assistance and add their valued input. The Office of Alumni Relations at Luther College, led by Director Sherry Alcock, works closely with the committee to help organize a successful event. Greeting the audience of 168 at the Saturday morning brunch -- which was held prior to the start of the golf tournament -- were Jim Jermier, Vice President for Development, Brian Solberg ’88, Associate Professor HPE and Program Director of Athletic Training, Caleb Padilla, Head Football Coach, Dave Mitchell, Head Wrestling Coach and Russ Schouweiler, Head Women’s Soccer Coach & Assistant Athletic Director for Resource Development. Glenn Austad ’62 introduced the undefeated 1963 Conference Championship Luther Football team.
A “banner day” was enjoyed by the 124 golfers. The men were represented by 16 foursomes comprised of 64 golfers. The winning foursome included Larry Noble, Tim Hahn, Rich Bross and Tim Rilley. The women’s division included 4 foursomes of 16 golfers. The winning foursome was Kathy Mobley-Noble, Helen House, Lynn Brooks and Phyllis Rankin. The co-ed division, comprised of 11 foursomes, 44 golfers, were led by Jerry Gipp, Elaine Gipp, Tom Gillman and Ginny Gillman Simenson.

Following the golf tournament, Paula Carlson, President of Luther College, opened the celebratory banquet with a warm welcome to an audience of 198 people. Dr. Carlson remarked about the current and future affairs at Luther. Steve Messer ’64 delivered a dinner prayer and Greg Luther ’90 was the banquet’s “MC”. Jane (Greene) Hildebrand ’74 and Brian Solberg ’88 spoke on behalf of Betty Hoff ’60, who was honored at the dinner for her many years of service to the Health and Physical Education Department and the Women’s Athletic Department (1961-2004).

Kent Finanger, his wife Lois, the committee and the Norse Athletic Association extend a great debt of gratitude to the many friends of Luther who have contributed their time and talents over the years to sponsor many aspects of the golf classic. Please mark your calendars and join friends and alumni at the Fourteenth Annual Kent Finanger ’54 Golf Classic at Goodyear, Arizona on Friday, March 22, and Saturday, March 23, 2019.
Joe and Mary Holland (L) and Nordeen and Mary Lou Halder son have contributed greatly to the event over the years.

The committee members for the Kent Finanger Golf Classic include: RuthAnn (Johnson) Atkinson '65, Karen (Swain) '62 and Glenn Austad '62, Dennis and Suzanne Birkestrand '64, Barb (Erickson) '67 and Ron Dodd '64, Lydia Eager '16, Dan Finanger '87, Lois and Kent Finanger '54, Mark and Lois (Dunleavy) Finanger '77, Amy (Silseth) '84 and Jay Ganske '82, Fay Henning-Bryant '64, Gregg Luther '90, Lila and LaRoy Luther '60, Karin (Knutsen) '61 and Clay Lyon '61, Linda (Ladd) '64 and Steve Messer '64, Diane (Hoveland) '63 and Loren Moen '61, Lloyd Nelson '51, Terry and Armin Pipto '60, Deb (Dahl) '81 and Tim Rilley, Jane and Rick Theiler '72, Diane (Mallu) '65 and Bob Thompson '65

LaRoy Luther (L), Clay Lyon and Armin Pipto (R) are three of the “original committee” members who continue to take an active role in "The Classic".

Kent Finanger '54 was a professor in the health and physical education department at Luther College. He served as Chair of the department from 1964-1996. As a coach at his alma mater, he logged nearly 90 seasons of coaching in five sports: baseball, basketball, cross country, football, and track and field.

Kent and his wife, Lois, join the NAA and KFGC Committee, inviting you to mark your calendars and join friends and alumni at the Fourteenth Annual Kent Finanger '54 Golf Classic at Goodyear, Arizona on Friday, March 22, and Saturday, March 23, 2019.

Additional details can be found on the Luther College website: www.luther.edu/alumni/events/naa/Arizona/

You can also join the Kent Finanger '54 Arizona Golf Classic Facebook page and get all the updates by clicking HERE.