



F O U N D A T I O N
I N C .

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY, SECURING OUR FUTURE





MISSION STATEMENT

The 1881 Foundation exists to restore, preserve and protect the building and grounds of Oakwood Country Club, ensuring this historic landmark thrives and endures for generations to come.



ANNOUNCING THE 1881 FOUNDATION, INC. PRESERVING OUR HISTORY, SECURING OUR FUTURE

As Oakwood Country Club continues its exciting transformation, we remain deeply committed to preserving and honoring the legacy of our historic clubhouse and grounds.

To ensure these landmarks thrive and endure for generations to come, we are proud to announce the establishment of the 1881 Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Your tax-deductible gifts to this charitable foundation will safeguard Oakwood's rich heritage and protect our treasured piece of Kansas City history, ensuring Oakwood remains a vibrant and welcoming community in perpetuity. (See page 10 for giving levels and ways to get involved).

Our mission: To build a permanent endowment to fund the ongoing preservation of Oakwood, including its historic building and grounds, its architectural legacy, and its important and impactful generational history.

Founded in 1881, Oakwood Country Club holds a unique position as one of only two clubs in the United States that began as a Jewish club and has since earned its place on the National Historic Registry — a truly remarkable distinction. Adding to this legacy, Oakwood is also part of an exclusive group of just 35 private clubs out of 4,000 nationwide, including such well-known clubs as Oakmont Country Club, Merion Golf Club, Baltusrol Golf Club, and Winged

Foot Golf Club, that have been granted 501(c)(3) nonprofit status to ensure the preservation of its rich history.

Fewer than 1% of private clubs across the country are listed on the National Historic Registry, and only a select few hold this rare 501(c)(3) designation, underscoring Oakwood's exceptional commitment to safeguarding its heritage for generations to come.

"For me, starting in my youth through today, Oakwood has been the center of my life and my main source for recreational and social activities. I have made so many friends, business colleagues, and community partners for life – all because of Oakwood."

– Kenneth G. Block





Arnold Palmer takes a swing during an exhibition in 1982.

“Allow me to start this letter about Oakwood by suggesting that I may have been a member for longer than any other living member. This year (2022) I celebrated 99 years of membership. Joan Meinrath and I were married there. It was a beautiful, joyful wedding. Oakwood was the perfect venue.

Oakwood Country Club will always be a place of fond memories and good times.”

– Bert Berkley

WHY IS A CHARITABLE FOUNDATION SO ESSENTIAL TO OAKWOOD?

While the responsibility of preserving history carries a price, the opportunity to protect Oakwood’s legacy for future generations is truly priceless. Preserving our historic clubhouse and grounds goes far beyond the initial restoration we’ve accomplished to date — it requires a long-term, sustained financial commitment to ensure their continued care. Restoring and maintaining historic structures is a complex and costly undertaking, but the investment is justified by the irreplaceable cultural and architectural value they represent.

Oakwood is so much more than a country club — it’s a piece of Kansas City history that deserves to be protected and celebrated.

Oakwood is the oldest country club in the region — a community treasure with deep historical roots for over 144 years. Many historic clubs have faded away due to lack of preservation—our goal is to ensure Oakwood thrives for generations to come.



Above: John and Jenny Isenberg’s wedding at Oakwood with attendants Lynn Epstein Poskin and Tom Isenberg.

Right: Former U.S. President Harry S. Truman, sporting his signature bow-tie, plays poker at Oakwood.

Oakwood’s legacy was formally recognized in 2021 with a historic registry designation. Its history is beautifully chronicled in *Oakwood: The First Hundred Years*, authored by Ward Katz. The Club’s humble beginnings as a sanctuary for the Jewish community gained its historic registry recognition nearly 110 years after its inception.

In recent years, what were once ambitious visions for improvement have become tangible realities. Oakwood has delivered on every commitment and exceeded expectations, transforming investments into a comprehensive reimagining of the Club’s experience. Now it’s time to take another step forward.

THE 1881 FOUNDATION - A CAMPAIGN FOR THE NEXT 100 YEARS

We have launched a voluntary fundraising campaign to preserve and enhance Oakwood’s historic clubhouse and grounds. As a tax-exempt organization, all contributions will directly support



A Legacy Preserved

THE HISTORY OF OAKWOOD COUNTRY CLUB

Founded in 1881, Oakwood Country Club began as the Progress Club—a gathering place for Kansas City’s Jewish community, created to provide enriching social experiences for children.

It was a known fact that from the 1880s, when the Progress Club was founded, through the 1960s, Jews were not permitted in several of the more prestigious social or business clubs in Kansas City. The same also held true for country clubs through the 1980s. This was a contributing factor to Oakwood’s success.

As the city grew and recreational trends evolved, so did the Club’s vision. In 1911, Oakwood secured its current location just outside city limits with the purchase of the W.A. Rule Farm for \$50,000. Transforming the historic property into its permanent home that same year, renowned course architect Tom Bendelow designed the original nine hole course, with an additional nine added in 1923.

The Progress Club/Oakwood offered a haven for a community facing antisemitism and housing discrimination throughout the decades and its story is a testament to perseverance, progress, and pride.

Throughout the decades, Oakwood has continued to evolve while honoring its rich heritage. In 1991, legendary golfer Tom Watson contributed to the redesign of key holes, adding a modern touch to the course’s classic layout. A major milestone came in 2020, when celebrated golf course architects Todd Clark and Ron Whitten—led by managing principal Ken Block—oversaw a complete transformation of the championship course. Their work was nationally recognized, earning

“It was the social tool for Jewish folks, and while we couldn’t go anywhere else because they would not have us, being a member of Oakwood was like a coat of arms.” – Elaine Sight

Oakwood the distinction of 3rd Best Golf Course Transformation in America by Golf Digest.

Over \$30 million has been spent so far on the following enhancements:

- The transformed 18-hole course features tee options from 4,500 to over 7,150 yards, culminating in a championship layout now recognized as the most challenging course in the metro area.
- The Putting Cottage and “The Hammer” 12-hole putting course.
- A state-of-the-art Performance Center and transformed Range, rated one of the top 50 practice facilities in the country.
- A lively new Sports Bar and modern Fitness Center
- The Intimidator Par 3 Course, rated #12 in the country in only its first year.
- New and expanded Tennis & Pickleball Center.
- Numerous clubhouse enhancements and golf course refinements.

Oakwood remains committed to preservation, progress, and excellence. We’re currently

investing an additional \$7.5 million in this newest phase of enhancements—finishing touches that will further elevate the member experience and highlight the beauty and historical relevance of the Club’s facilities.

These enhancements include:

- An expanded children’s pool and brand-new splash pad
- Enhanced lounging and poolside spaces.
- A newly renovated snack bar and poolside center.
- Brand new boys and girls locker rooms.
- A refreshed and expanded Golf Shop.

A new second-floor entertainment space, The Lofts, which includes an upscale speakeasy lounge, boardroom, and business center with private workspaces. This new renovation, replaces the apartments and living spaces used by club members in the 1930s and 1940s before roads were extended to the club. Features of the renovation will capture the beauty of the property from this period.

Additional refinements to the golf course and infrastructure systems throughout the clubhouse.

These continued investments ensure Oakwood is not only the premier private club in Kansas City—but a rising name on the national stage. These investments will also preserve the historic facilities of the Club.



Above: Weneck Party at Oakwood for NBC executives and announcers during the 1976 Republican National Convention. From left, Robert Weneck, Tom Brokaw, Mrs. Weneck, David Brinkley, and John Chancellor.



Left: Tom Watson teeing off on the four holes he redesigned at Oakwood Country Club in 1992.

ongoing restoration efforts and improvements, ensuring Oakwood's legacy endures for future generations.

The Foundation's success depends on private contributions from members and from the community at large who share our passion for historic preservation, golf, and a strong club culture. Your support will fund critical renovations, ensuring our facilities remain world-class while respecting the club's original character.

A successful fundraising campaign ensures Oakwood can make improvements without future special assessments. Together, we can protect Oakwood's rich history and ensure its future remains just as vibrant.

The Foundation has formed a Board of Directors, whose members will play a vital role in overseeing the preservation efforts, fundraising initiatives, and long-term planning to maintain Oakwood's historic charm and structural integrity.

There are two other leadership groups forming - a Community Advisory Board where members and non-members will provide knowledge and expertise and assist



The grand hall beautifully decorated for a wedding

with future goals. And we are seeking dedicated members who share a passion for Oakwood's history and future to serve as Campaign Cabinet Leaders, a subgroup of the Community Advisory Board. These individuals will play a key role in championing our mission, helping to rally support, and guiding fundraising efforts, both locally and nationally.

If you are interested in becoming a leader in this vital initiative or learning more about how you can contribute, please reach out. Together, we can preserve the heart of Oakwood while continuing its transformation for generations to come.

THE TAX-EXEMPT ADVANTAGE

Donations to the 1881 Foundation are fully tax-deductible, making it a smart philanthropic investment for individuals and businesses alike.

Donations can also be made from your Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA). Please consult your Tax Advisor. Stock/securities, real estate, bonds, or other non-cash assets are also accepted.

WAYS TO SUPPORT THE 1881 FOUNDATION

Supporting Oakwood's preservation through the 1881 Foundation is flexible and accessible. Contributions can be made as an upfront donation or pledged over several years, with options to give as noted above.

"Oakwood has been very special to me. In the Jewish community, it played a big part... there were Federation dinners, golf tournaments... The FBI Citizens Academy Tournament was one of the early outside tournaments allowed at Oakwood."

- Myron Wang



No immediate payment is required — donations are due by the end of the year in which they are pledged.

We encourage 100% participation by our members to showcase our community's shared commitment to Oakwood's legacy. We also hope to have widespread community involvement in this campaign, both locally and nationally.

DONOR RECOGNITION & GIVING LEVELS

1881 Society | \$100,000 and Up

Founder's Circle | \$50,000 – \$99,999

Oakwood Club | \$25,000 – \$49,999

Progress Club | \$10,000 – \$24,999

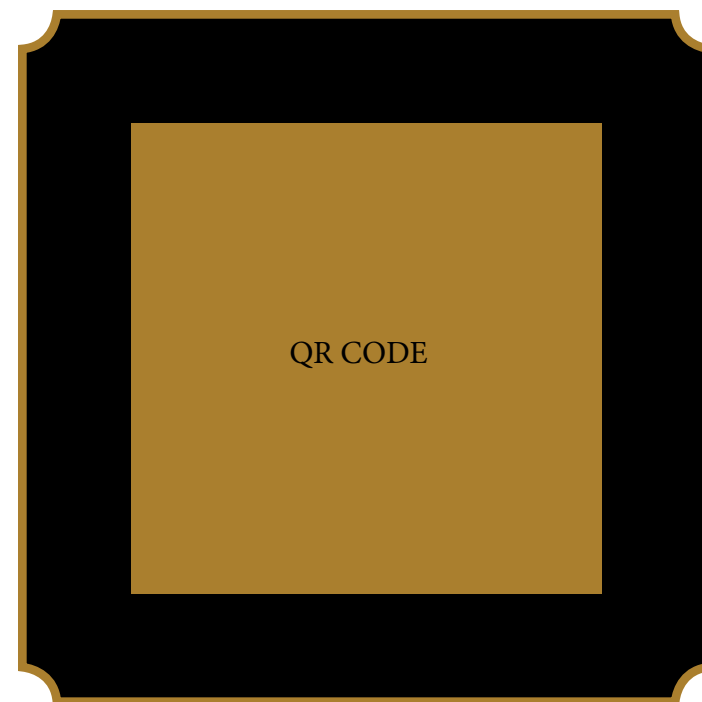
No gift is too small or too large—every contribution strengthens Oakwood's future.

All donors will be recognized in marketing/social media. 1881 Society donors will have a permanent plaque, monument, or other permanent remembrance of their donations placed at a visible site at the club.

HOW TO PLEDGE

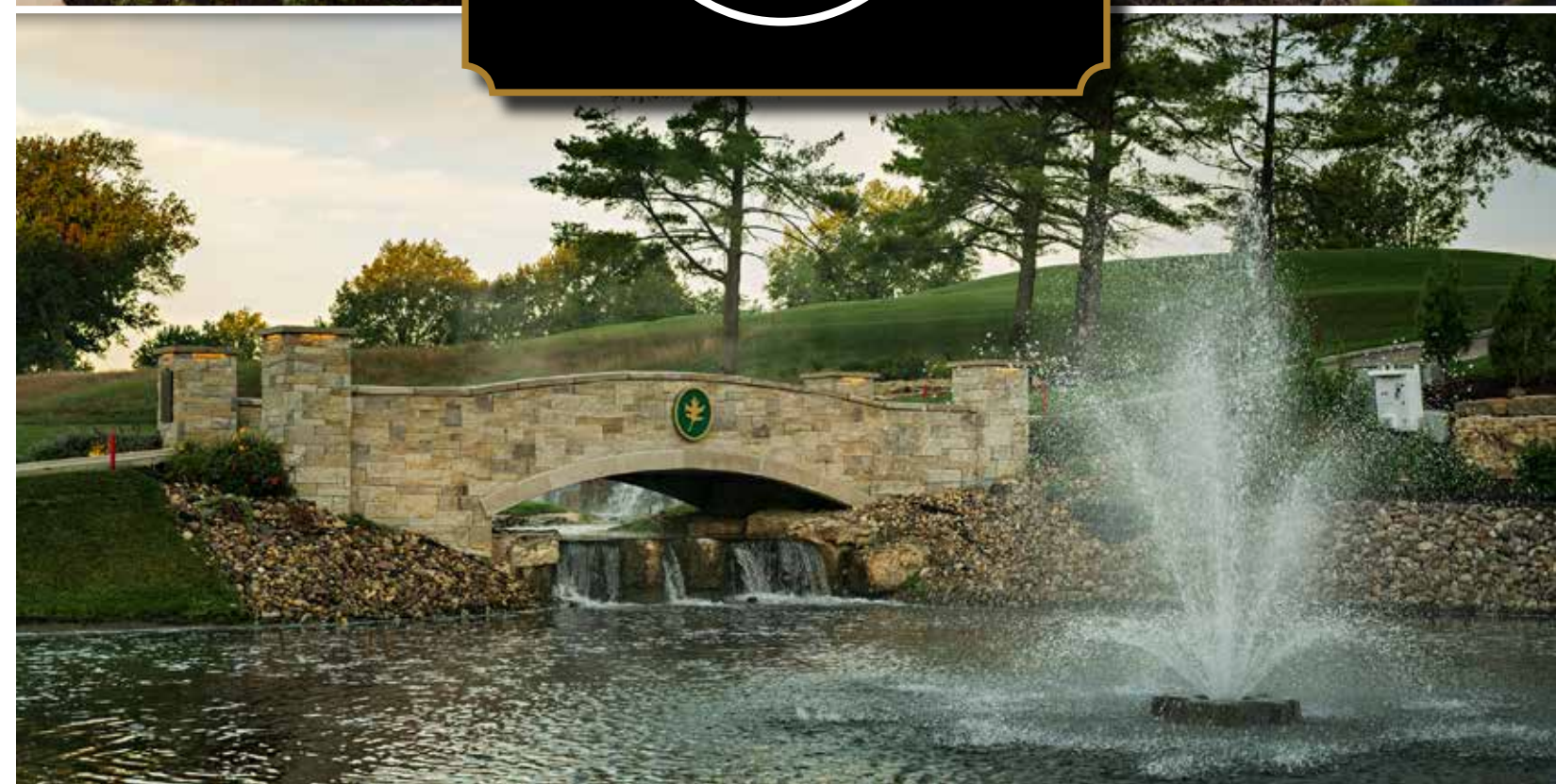
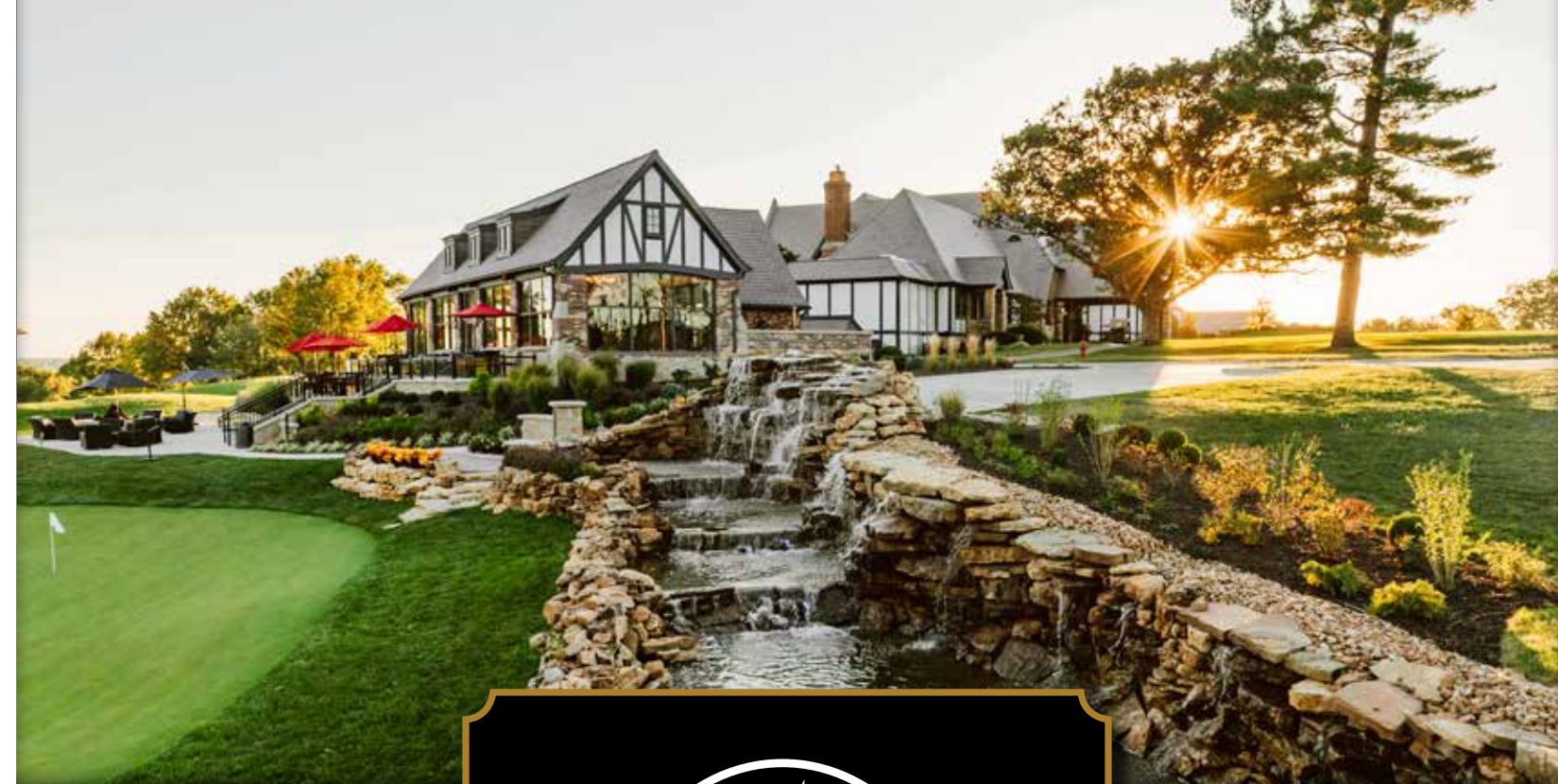
Pick up a donor pledge card at the front desk and return it at your convenience or contact our campaign team at donations@1881Foundation.org.

Thank you for your support in preserving Oakwood's historic legacy for generations to come!



Top: Ken Block and leadership team (Steven Shrawder, Hunter Hayes and Maureen Farrell) reviewing golf course improvements and planning for the spectacular future of Oakwood Country Club.

Bottom: Whitey Ford, Charlie Lewis, Ralph Terry, Mickey Mantle, Bob Slight and Bill Slight, circa 1956





www.1881Foundation.org