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Marvin Leonard was born in 1895 on a farm in northeast Texas, just outside of a small town called Linden near the Arkansas-Louisiana border. While not considered to be poor, the lifestyle of his youth might be described as frugal.

In 1918 at the age of 24, Marvin Leonard, joined later by his brother, Obie, opened Leonards Department Store in Fort Worth. Leonards was destined to become “one of the largest and most diversified merchandising establishments in the South.” Later endeavors in real estate, oil, insurance, building and banking further demonstrated Marvin’s capitalist acumen.

In 1922, Marvin joined Glen Garden Country Club in Fort Worth and started playing golf. He found the game slow, thought that it required too much time away from business, and temporarily retired his clubs.

But too much work and not enough play brought on stomach problems and chronic fatigue for Leonard and so, in 1927, Marvin’s physician advised him to take up golf again or prepare to “crack up” instead.

This time, in Marty Leonard’s words, “the golf bug bit Daddy,” and soon he was trying to play at least three times a week at either Glen Garden Country Club or River Crest. It was at Glen Garden that Leonard became acquainted with a few of the boys who worked as caddies. One of the young guys was Byron Nelson. Another was a kid named Ben Hogan.

In the years that followed, Leonard would become a mentor and father figure to Hogan. Marvin Leonard provided financial assistance enabling Hogan to begin to pursue his career as a professional golfer, and later the backing necessary for Hogan’s golf equipment manufacturing company. The two men remained close for the rest of Marvin’s life.

Marvin Leonard.



Fabian Bachrach