

Trump tees up medal for Tiger Woods; some question motives

By KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — If there were a Mount Rushmore for golfers, Tiger Woods would probably be on it. But President Donald Trump’s decision to award the nation’s highest civilian honor to Woods has raised questions about whether the president should be boosting the profile of a business associate of The Trump Organization.

Trump planned to present the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Woods during a White House ceremony Monday evening. The president announced his intention to do so after Woods won the Masters Tournament last month, capping a remarkable recovery from injury and years of personal troubles that had left some wondering whether he would ever win again at the professional level. Woods earned his 15th major golf championship with his Masters win and his 81st overall



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

President Donald Trump speaks during the presentation of the Commander-in-Chief’s Trophy to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point football team, in the Rose Garden of the White House on Monday in Washington.

on the PGA Tour, both ranking second.

Trump understood the importance of the moment to golf and its fans, tweeting that he was awarding Woods the medal because of his “incredible Success & Comeback in Sports (Golf) and, more importantly, LIFE.”

Trump has been using Woods’ cachet to attract

fans to his properties for decades. Trump got Woods to show up at his casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey, a day after the golfer’s first Masters victory in 1997. The place was mobbed. Two thousand fans showed up as Woods walked down a 320-foot red carpet, some of them storming steel barricades to get a closer look.

Trump has also struck

business deals with Woods.

Golfers at Trump’s club in Doral, Florida, can stay at the Tiger Woods Villa. At a ribbon cutting ceremony in 2014, Woods lavished praise on Trump, calling changes he made to the club “phenomenal.”

In Dubai, Woods designed an 18-hole course to be managed by The Trump Organization.

The Trump Organization has “repeatedly demonstrated their ability to successfully manage unique, high-end courses and golf clubs, and this is no exception,” Woods said in a 2018 interview in the company’s in-house magazine.

Ethics officials have criticized Trump for not selling off his assets completely and holding the money in a blind trust. Instead, he set up a trust to hold his assets, handed day-to-day management responsibilities to two sons and hired an ethics lawyer to vet business deals. Trump can draw money from the trust and, after the

presidency, can benefit if his properties increase in value.

“You have to ask whether it’s his true belief Tiger Woods deserves this award or whether he’s doing it to help his business,” said Jordan Libowitz, communications director at Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a left-leaning public policy group.

Christopher Devine, an associate professor of political science at the University of Dayton, said Trump may have a business angle.

Still, Devine said, when he stacks up Woods’ accomplishments against other recipients, there’s no denying Woods deserves it, calling his Masters victory “the greatest comeback in sports of all time.”

Woods is the fourth pro golfer to receive the award. President George W. Bush presented the Medal of Freedom to Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. Obama presented it to Charlie Sifford.

Devine also noted that previous presidents have

presented the award to supporters and political donors. For example, Obama awarded the Medal of Freedom to Bruce Springsteen, who performed in concerts to support Obama’s election efforts.

The Medal of Freedom is given to individuals who have made “especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors,” according to the White House. Presidents have complete discretion over whom they honor with the medal.

Some athletes and sports champions have resisted visiting the Trump White House because of their differences with the president.

Rick Reilly, who wrote a book about Trump’s golfing titled “Commander in Cheat,” said Woods has brought golf to people of color all over the world, while Trump has promoted it as a sport for the rich.

Ice Cube, others mourn director Singleton at private funeral in Los Angeles

By ANDREW DALTON
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Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Family, friends and dignitaries including Ice Cube, Stevie Wonder and Congresswoman Maxine Waters were among those mourning director John Singleton at his Los Angeles funeral on Monday.

The private service was held in South Los Angeles, the neighborhood formerly known as South Central, where Singleton spent part of his childhood and where his career-defining film, “Boyz n the Hood,” was set.

Media was not allowed inside the funeral, which

lasted about two hours before Singleton’s casket was carried out.

Others who paid their respects include “Black Panther” director Ryan Coogler and the film’s Academy Award-winning costume designer Ruth Carter, “Straight Outta Compton” director F. Gary Gray, football Hall of Famer Jim Brown, rapper Ludacris, and actors Ving Rhames, Morris Chestnut, Nia Long, Taraji P. Henson and Tyrese.

Tyrese was among the stars of Singleton’s 2001 film “Baby Boy” and 2003’s “2 Fast 2 Furious.” Chestnut, Ice Cube and Long all appeared in “Boyz n the Hood,” Singleton’s 1991 first feature, which made



AP Photo/Richard Shotwell, File

This March 4, 2018, file photo shows John Singleton at the Oscars in Los Angeles. Oscar-nominated filmmaker John Singleton has died at 51, according to statement from his family. His funeral was Monday.

him the first black filmmaker and youngest person to be nominated for a best director Oscar.

The film was the acting debut for Ice Cube and Chestnut. Both praised the director at the time of his

death, with Cube saying in a statement that spoke directly to Singleton that his “passion for telling our stories from our point of view was more than an obsession, it was your mission in life. Your love for the black experience was contagious.”

The director’s other films included 1993’s “Poetic Justice,” 2000’s “Shaft” and 2005’s “Four Brothers,” and he was the co-creator of the current FX television series “Snowfall.”

The service came a week after Singleton’s family announced that he had died at age 51, days after he suffered a stroke. A family statement said Singleton was taken off life sup-

port on March 29 and died, though a death certificate issued Monday lists the date of his death as March 28.

The director’s mother Shelia Ward filed court documents Friday that included Singleton’s 1993 will. The will names Ward as executor and leaves nearly all of his property to daughter Justice Singleton, who at the time was his only child. He later had four more children.

Ward and her attorney estimate in the document that Singleton’s estate is worth \$3.8 million.

A Singleton representative said his family is planning a public memorial and is deciding on the details, a representative said.



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