

2004

Eldrick "Tiger" Woods

Stephen Lowe

Olivet Nazarene University, slowe@olivet.edu

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Recommended Citation

Lowe, Stephen, "Eldrick "Tiger" Woods" (2004). *Faculty Scholarship – History*. 10.
https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/hist_facp/10

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Woods, Eldrick “Tiger.” (30 December 1975, Cypress, California–) Golf great Tiger Woods is the son of Earl Woods, a retired colonel in the U.S. Army. Although Woods is usually identified as African American, his father is of African, American Indian, and Chinese ancestry, and his mother, Kultida Punsawad Woods, is Thai, Chinese, and Caucasian. After completing high school, Woods enrolled at Stanford University, where he attended for two years before joining the professional golf tour in August 1996.

By the time Woods turned professional, he had compiled one of the finest amateur golf records ever. In addition to junior events, Woods won the U.S. Amateur in 1994, 1995, and 1996, becoming the first golfer in history to win that title in three consecutive years. He won his first professional tournament, the Las Vegas Invitational, just weeks after joining the PGA Tour. In 1997, Woods won his first “major” tournament, The Masters. While continuing to collect minor tournament titles, in 1999 Woods won his second major event, the PGA Championship. In 2000-2001, Woods had one of the greatest competitive golf seasons in history, becoming the first player to win four straight major titles (U.S. Open, British Open, PGA Championships in 2000, and The Masters in 2001), completing the career Grand Slam, and winning twelve tournaments overall. By early 2001, the twenty-five-year-old Woods had won twenty-seven professional events. In the process, Woods signed multi-million dollar endorsement contracts, making him one of the wealthiest and arguably the most recognized athlete in the world.

Although it is early to evaluate Woods’s historical significance, it is safe to conclude that he is by far the most successful minority athlete in golf and that he will be considered among the greatest competitive golfers of all time. Woods should also be mentioned with the likes of Walter Hagen, Byron Nelson, and Arnold Palmer—men who contributed to golf by popularizing it and broadening its appeal. Finally, whereas Lee Elder’s place in history was established when he became the first minority to compete in the

Masters Tournament in 1975, Tiger Woods will always be remembered as the first minority to win that coveted title.

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Stephen R. Lowe