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The Buick Open

One year after Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club opened in 1957, Waldo McNaught used his unique position as club president and public relations director of the Buick Motor Division of the General Motors Corporation (GM) to organize a golf tournament here. The collaboration between Warwick Hills, Buick, and the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) Tour resulted in the first Buick Open, held in June 1958. The event coincided with GM's "Golden Milestone" fiftieth anniversary. Company officials allowed the use of the Buick name, and provided each golfer with a new car to use during the tournament. This marked the first corporate sponsorship of a PGA Tour event. The success of the 1958 open created a partnership that continued into the twenty-first century.

Significant Date:

Post WWII (1945-1970)

Registry Year: 2009 **Erected Date:** 2009

Marker Location

Address: G-9057 South Saginaw Road

City: Grand Blanc

State: MI **ZipCode:** 48439

County: Genesee

Township: Grand Blanc

Lat: 42.90102040 / **Long:** -83.59967529

Web URL:

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For five days in June 1958, golfers from across the country came to Grand Blanc to play in the first Buick Open. The field included what Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) Tour supervisor Harvey Raynor called the greatest field in PGA Tour history. A fifty-two-thousand-dollar purse, the largest of the 1958 season, was a big draw for many players, while "big-time golf", one-dollar admission, and free parking drew more than fifty thousand fans. On the eighteenth hole of the final round, any of four golfers had a chance to win the open. In near darkness and chilling temperatures, Billy Casper, with the final shot of the tournament, sank a putt of three and one-half feet to win by one stroke and claim the top prize of nine thousand dollars – and a brand new Buick.