Hans Schmeisser Receives Palm Beach Chapter’s First Distinguished Service Award

Hans Schmeisser, left, and his son, Otto, president of the Palm Beach Chapter of GCSA.

On June 18 at a Gulfstream Golf Club chapter meeting Hans Schmeisser was awarded a plaque by the Palm Beach group.

Scott Sincerbeau made the presentation to Hans and said the following:

“As chairman of the Special Awards Committee I take great pride in being able to tell you about the first recipient of the Palm Beach Chapter Superintendent’s Association Distinguished Service Award.

“South Florida is blessed with many of the best golf course superintendents in the world. Special among these men is a superintendent with 50 years active service in our profession, a man that by being an honest, sincere, friendly professional person has established most of the standards that we work by today.

“I will introduce him to you then I would like to tell you some of the highlights of his career.

“The 1980 recipient of the Palm Beach Chapter Distinguished Service Award is Mr. Hans Schmeisser.

“To understand Hans’ career I think it is important to picture in your mind the early 1930’s when there were only three or four golf courses in Miami and only a handful in all of South Florida. It was a time when superintendents didn’t have others to look to for help and there were no best ways of doing business or fancy equipment to work with.

“Hans first golf course was a resort course at Everglades City for Mr. Collier (of Collier County fame). He had flower beds, elaborate entranceways, lush landscaping and a golf course in the middle of the Everglades in the early 1930’s. Because of the quality of work Hans did and the clientele at Mr. Collier’s resort, Hans met many famous people in-

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Hans Schmiesser Honored

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cluding Dr. Fairchild from the world famous Fairchild Gardens in Miami. Dr. Fairchild and Hans became very close friends. When Dr. Fairchild would bring exotic seeds from various parts of the world he would give some of them to Hans to plant throughout the state. Hans was the first to plant Australian Pines and Malalucca on the West Coast of Florida, at a time when they were looked on with great favor.

"Hans was the first in Florida to test and use 2-4-D. Even before World War II he found it would easily control broad-leaf weeds. 2-4-D wasn't on the market for six more years, at the end of World War II.

"Tom Mascara brought his first greens aerifier to Hans to try. Tom said Hans would tell you right away if it was any good or not. Here against was a first.

"At La Gorce in Miami in the late 1940's Hans made selections of Bermuda grass, established plots and from the plots started the best varieties on greens. Remember now, that Dr. Burton didn't even begin his work at Tifton until about 1948. In fact, Dr. Burton collected many varieties from Hans at La Gorce.

"By the way, Hans has attended Dr. Burton's Southeastern Turfgrass Conferences at Tifton since the beginning of 1948. Hans has also been a member of the GCSAA since 1948.

"Forrest Hills Golf Course in Lake Worth, where Hans is superintendent, was the first golf course to use Tifdwarf on greens when it was released in 1965. Forrest Hills is one of many courses that Hans designed and built over the years. He has helped in rebuilding many, many more, working with golf course architects such as Toomey & Flynn, Mark Mahanna, Red Lawrence, Dick Wilson and Robert Trent Jones.

"Hans has three sons. John, who is Robert Trent Jones' righ-hand man; Fred, who is not in the turf business, and Otto who, of course, is the golf course superintendent at the Everglades Club in Palm Beach and president of the Palm Beach Chapter of GCSA."

The plaque was presented by Otto Schmisser. The presentation met with a standing ovation.