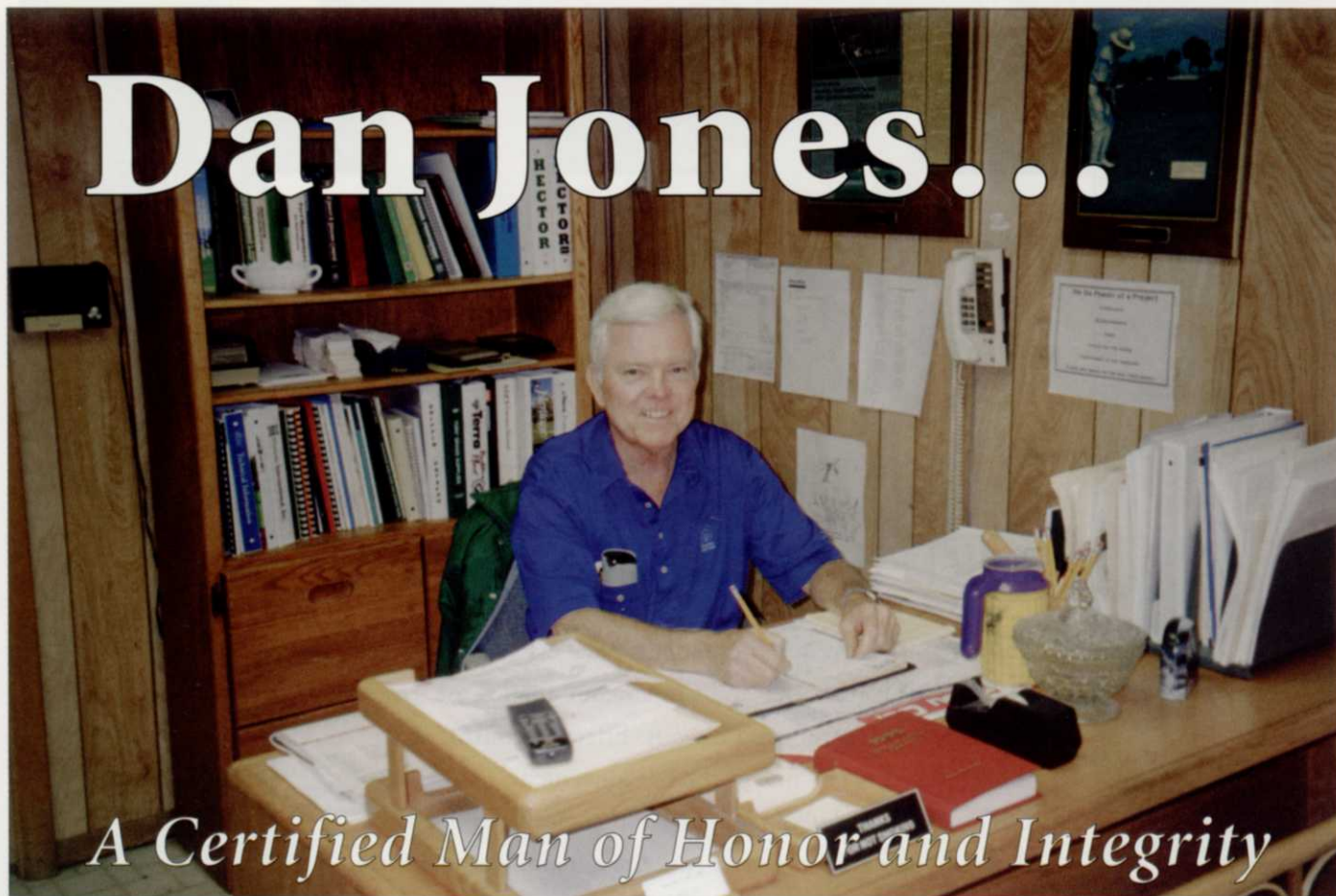


Dan Jones....



A Certified Man of Honor and Integrity

Dan Jones, CGCS, winner of the 1999 GCSAA Distinguished Service Award shown here at his desk at the Banyan Golf Club just before his retirement in April, 1998. Photo by Mark Jarrell.

BY MARK JARRELL, CGCS

In April of 1998, when Dan Jones announced his resignation from The Banyan Golf Club in West Palm Beach after 18 years of service there and a total of 33 years as a golf course superintendent, his intentions were to work a while on the commercial side and quietly fade into retirement. His many friends and peers in Florida wouldn't hear of it.

Though Dan had garnered many awards during his distinguished career - including the Leo Feser Award in 1978, the FGCSA's Distinguished Service Award in 1987; the FTGA's "Wreath of Grass" Award also in 1987, and numerous awards as editor/publisher of *The Florida Green* — his colleagues had one more in mind!

Nominated and strongly endorsed by

the Florida GCSA, Morris Daniel Jones was awarded the GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award on his first nomination during ceremonies at the GCSAA's 70th International Golf Course Conference and Show in Orlando, affirming the national significance of his contributions to the golf and turf industry.

Some of these contributions include participating in trials of both warm- and cool-season grasses; cooperating on field trials of many new pesticides and biological control agents; authoring articles and speaking at numerous functions; serving on the Lake City School of Golf Course Operations' Advisory Board; testing and advocating the use of the white amur for aquatic weed control; serving his state as the president of the Florida Turfgrass Association; and acting as a teacher, role model, counselor, and friend to a countless number of turfgrass professionals.

For his crowning achievement, one need look no further than the masthead of this magazine to find the name Dan Jones as Editor Emeritus. His name will forever be synonymous with *The Florida Green*. For 14 years beginning in 1976, Dan and his wife Irene published the magazine, taking it from a small South Florida Chapter newsletter, to the award-winning official magazine of the Florida GCSA. This was in the days before the computer made desktop publishing possible, and everything was cut and pasted to fit its given space. As David Bailey, CGCS of Turnberry Isles and Dan's right hand on the magazine in those early years, recalls, "Dan and Irene put in an unbelievable amount of time on the magazine. At times it seemed that half their house was filled with magazines and publishing paraphernalia."

Dan's professional accomplishments,

emblazoned by the awards he has received in recognition of his service and sacrifice, will remain as his official legacy. I will leave further documentation and embellishment of his official contributions to writers more talented. Dan's more endearing, and enduring, legacy, in the humble opinion of one who has known him and called him friend for 18 years, can be summarized by the simple word, "character."

Many people have done great deeds at the expense of their humanity — hard work and sacrifice often require that compromise to reach the mountaintop. More than the consummate professional, Dan Jones is a man of virtue, honor, compassion, generosity, and integrity, tempered by humility and a fun-loving sense of humor. He walks the mountain on the shoulders of all those to whom he has extended his friendship, support, and counsel.

The proof is in the testimony of those who have known and worked with Dan

throughout his long and distinguished career. World class golf course designer Joe Lee says, "I have never met a finer gentleman than Dan Jones. He is extremely skilled in his craft, and no superintendent has tried harder to maintain the integrity of the golf course design."

Bob Jacobson, Dan's Green Committee Chairman at Banyan for nine years, calls Dan "a fine human being. We became very close friends and I miss him. He loved his work and took a great interest in the well being of his crew."

In the golf business, it is often typical, at least privately, for the succeeding superintendent to criticize perceived failings of his predecessor. Not so in Dan's case. Clint Smallridge, CGCS, who followed Dan at the Banyan, had nothing but praise for the man he describes as "a giant in the industry. In Clint's inimitable words, "I've been smelling Dan's trail for many years. It is an honor beyond measure to follow him at Banyan. I hope I can live up to his legacy".

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Clint Smallridge, CGCS

It is interesting and revealing to note that the current presidents of both the Florida GCSA and the Florida Turfgrass Association are former Dan Jones' assistants.

Mike Perham, CGCS, president of the Florida GCSA and superintendent at The Fountains Golf Club, had this to say about Dan: "During the nearly two years that I worked for Dan, and the subse-

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*The manner in which
Dan was able to
allocate his time to
assure all
responsibilities were
taken care of greatly
impressed me.*

Mike Perham, CGCS

quent 19 years that I have remained in contact with him, the most striking quality that continues to impress me is that of professionalism.

"During our tenure together at Aventura/Turnberry, Dan was editor of *The Florida Green* and heavily involved with the South Florida GCSA and the FTGA, all the while managing a 36-hole complex that hosted LPGA and PGA Senior events. The manner in which Dan was able to allocate his time to assure all responsibilities were taken care of greatly impressed me.

"Since leaving Dan's employment, I have utilized his advice when contemplating an employment change, or with problems on the golf course. As recently as 1997 he took time out of his busy schedule to visit me at The Fountains and consult with my manager regarding a serious agronomic issue at the club.

"With Dan, family always came first. He was like a second father to me. Marcy and I got engaged to be married shortly after I began working for Dan. On several occasions, Dan and Irene took Marcy and me out to lunch to become better acquainted. These sessions enabled the four of us to become steadfast friends, kindling a relationship that has lasted over 20 years."

Scott Wahlin, CGCS, president of the Florida Turfgrass Association and superintendent at Longboat Key Golf Club, was similarly effusive in his praise: "I worked for Dan from May '83 until Janu-

ary '85. Everyone who worked for Dan gave the utmost willingly and generously. His presence alone generated excitement and esprit de corps.

"I attribute this to the tremendous level of personal leadership Dan exercised over himself. He did wonderful things for his crew that could only be attributed to compassion, empathy, and kindness. He took personal responsibility to assure the rewards of those who followed his leadership.

"Dan could see the whole picture of the golf course in one tour. He saw everything there was to see today, but also the potential. How he was able to take everything in all at once still eludes me. I think you have to be a superintendent to truly appreciate this. It still takes me many trips around the golf course to approach this and still I am sure I fall short.

"Looking at Dan's life and career you

have to conclude there were many times he kept focused and pushing when there was just nothing left. Well, in his case, maybe not.

"Family tragedies and difficulties had to have taken their toll through stress and distraction, but he addressed his personal challenges the way he addressed all challenges.

"He was always able to focus his thoughts and energy on the big picture. I thank God for the privilege of knowing a man with the greatness of Dan Jones. Knowing Dan has provided me with the courage and stamina to deal with the traumatic experiences of my life. There have been many times when things were very dark in my life when I have relied upon the wisdom and role model provided by Dan.

"Dan unselfishly provided me with the tools I needed to succeed in this honorable profession. He said things like,

Dan Jones

Born Morris Daniel Jones in 1936 in Moultrie, Georgia. Dan has been married to Irene for 42 years. He has two daughters - Denise and Cheryl - and 4 granddaughters - Jamie, Shayna, Raven, and Reagan. Dan has 6 brothers and 3 sisters, all living, and his 94-year-old mother lives in St. Petersburg.

Dan's career: 1965 - Fountain Valley Golf Course in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands; 1970 - Cerromar Beach Hotel in Puerto Rico; 1975 - Turnberry Isles; 1980 - The Banyan Club; 1998 - East Coast Sales Manager for Toro Liquid Ag, Inc.

Editor Emeritus: Dan began as editor and publisher of the *South Florida Green* magazine in July, 1976; The magazine became *The Florida Green* in 1980. Dan stepped down in 1989 after 14 years of award-winning publication service.

Awards: 1978 - Certified golf course superintendent; 1978 - GCSAA Leo Feser Award; 1987 - FTGA's "Wreath of Grass" Award; 1987 - FGCSA's "Distinguished Service Award; 1998 - GCSAA Distinguished Service Award.

The Best and Worst: Sunrises, sunsets, making a golf course shine, and his peers, is what Dan likes best about being a superintendent. Being on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and irrigation breaks at 3 p.m. on Fridays is what he likes least about being a superintendent.

Personal Comment: "I believe golf course superintendents are the finest group of people you can be associated with. People like Bill Wagner, Hans Schmeisser, Jimmy Blackledge, Joe Konwinski and Tom Mascaro I could go on and on for pages. I had a very personal satisfaction being the editor of *The Florida Green* for 14 years, being able to write articles, editorials, and encourage other superintendents to contribute. The many awards the magazine won are to be shared by all. I feel blessed by God to have had the career I've had for the past 33 years. I am looking forward to the challenge of the next 33."

Scott Wahlin, CGCS

"Next to God, if it wasn't for Dan Jones, I wouldn't be in the position I am

Another time Dan was sure another attempt to get him had occurred when he attended a meeting at John's Island,

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I have never met a finer gentleman than Dan Jones. He is extremely skilled in his craft, and no superintendent has tried harder to maintain the integrity of the golf course design.

Joe Lee

where Tim had relocated after Quail Ridge. Shortly after Dan's arrival, the late Whit Collins, who was the featured speaker, approached him and informed him that his tire was flat. Dan smelled a rat and refused to believe it, figuring Tim had put Whit up to it.

The truth is, Whit witnessed Dan getting out of his vehicle, and following him up to the clubhouse, noticed the tire was flat as he passed by. After telling Dan, he told Tim, and Tim had his mechanic repair the tire while the meeting was in session. Dan came out to a perfectly good tire and did not believe that it had ever been flat, that Tim's practical joke had failed. To this day he still believes the tire was never flat!

Tim says that Dan was just as good at dishing it out as receiving it, but wouldn't give him the satisfaction of acknowledging the remembrance of any of Dan's efforts. He concludes his comments by stating that "If gray hairs are any sign of intelligence, then Dan's the smartest person I've ever met", and "I look forward to the day I can be as old as Dan Jones."

Walt McMahon, CGCS, past president of the Palm Beach GCSA, now with

(Dan is) a fine human being. We became very close friends and I miss him. He loved his work and took a great interest in the well being of his crew.

Bob Jacobson
Greens Chairman



Architect Joe Lee, Greens Chairman Bob Jacobson and Superintendent Dan Jones discuss a project at Banyan Golf Club in 1989.

Golf Ventures, credits Dan with helping him to secure his first superintendent's job. Walt worked for Dan in the summer of 1978 at Turnberry doing his OJT with Lake City Community College. Dan prompted Walt to write an article for *The South Florida Green* about the herbicide trials they were conducting and took him to his first superintendent's meeting, introducing him to as many people as possible.

Dan then recommended Walt for an FTGA scholarship, which he received the following October. Dan worked it out with Lake City for Walt to come down in February to work for one week during the LPGA's Elizabeth Arden Clas-

sic, gaining invaluable experience with tournament operations.

Walt said, "In 1981, Dan's recommendation was the key to my getting my first superintendent job at Deer Creek at the ripe old age of 23. When I jumped ship to the supply side in 1993, Dan was very supportive and anxious for me to succeed. I sincerely thank Dan for all his help and friendship, and I congratulate him on winning the GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award".

Mike Bailey, CGCS, now with A & L Labs, became close with Dan 20 years ago when Mike was at Boca Greens. "Several people have had a major impact upon my life both professionally and personally, but Dan Jones stands head and shoulders above the rest.

"Dan urged me to write articles for *The Florida Green*, eventually instilling in me the confidence to begin my many years of association service, including the creation of the *Green Sheet*. Dan has that unique ability to make you feel com-

fortable and confident enough to take on new challenges. His help and influence persuaded me to leave the safe cocoon of Boca Greens and tackle the construction and maintenance of The Falls Country Club.

"I've always admired Dan's ability to be calm and in control, and be true to his friends and family. He has always had time for me and my family. He is a real superman in an era where heroes can't be trusted and many so-called friends aren't truly your friend. I feel very fortunate to know Dan and call him a true friend."

Joel Jackson, CGCS, current editor of *The Florida Green* had this to say about Dan:

"The thing I always admired about Dan was that he always "walked the talk." His infectious enthusiasm for the profession and *The Florida Green* was obviously contagious for me. I probably wouldn't be exploring this new role as director of communications for the as-

I've always admired Dan's ability to be calm and in control, and be true to his friends and family. He has always had time for me and my family. He is a real superman in an era where heroes can't be trusted and many so-called friends aren't truly your friend.

Mike Bailey



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Dan gave me the motivation and direction I needed to become a golf course superintendent. He became a role model, and set standards and techniques that I follow to this day.

David Demmery, CGCS

sociation if it hadn't been for Dan asking me 10 years ago if I was interested in taking over as editor of the magazine.

"Like so many others, I owe Dan a large debt of gratitude for his devotion and leadership for our profession. Although I didn't get to work for or with Dan in turf management, I was always inspired by his passion and professionalism at seminar presentations or FGCSA board meetings. I suppose I could call him a role model for those of us who volunteer to serve our associations."

It took David Demmery, CGCS of the Polo Club of Boca Raton, one week working for Dan at Turnberry to change career direction.

David took a job at the IFAS research station in Ft. Lauderdale under Dr. Jim Reinhert after graduating from FSU with a teaching degree.

He developed an interest in golf course maintenance from his exposure to turf research projects, but became sold on a career after working just one week for Dan at Turnberry.

Demmery recalls, "Dan gave me the motivation and direction I needed to become a golf course superintendent. He became a role model, and set standards and techniques that I follow to this day."

Dan's own start in the business was just as unconventional. He was working

as a maintenance engineer at a Rock Resorts hotel in St. Croix of the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1966 when he was asked by consultant Dr. Max Brown to try the superintendent's position on their new Fountain Valley Golf Course.

As Max, founder of Liquid Ag and currently director of agronomic services for Toro, tells it, "The golf course was not being maintained very well and within a very few months the golf course superintendent left.

"Rather than import another young superintendent from the states, the general manager and I chose to gamble on teaching this young, energetic, hard-working hotel engineer to be a golf course superintendent.

"I began by touring the course and explaining, 'this is a tee, this is a green, this is a sand trap, etc.' I wrote out precise descriptions for mowing, watering, cup cutting and all other procedures for maintaining a golf course. He had excellent people-handling skills and liked working from detailed procedures.

After two days of training, I left. I came back in two weeks and found the conditions of the golf course to be dramatically improved.

"Dan never quit asking questions and was a virtual sponge for information. I sent him text books, technical reprints, and university bulletins of all kinds. Every month that I returned, the golf course had improved considerably until it was voted the best-maintained golf course in the Caribbean Islands within two years of his taking over."

Dan stayed at Fountain Valley until 1970, when political unrest made him so uneasy that he requested a transfer to the Rock Resorts' Cerromar Beach in Puerto Rico. It proved to be a most providential decision.

Within three weeks of Dan's departure, seven people, including the young superintendent who replaced him, were murdered on the terrace of the clubhouse by members of an independence movement called "The Youngbloods."

At the Cerromar Beach Hotel, Dan supervised the construction and growth of two golf courses. He was then offered his choice of two jobs — chief

maintenance engineer for the combined Dorado Beach and Cerromar Beach Hotels and facilities, or superintendent of grounds for the two facilities, which included 72 holes of golf, 100 acres of hotel landscape, and nearly 2,000 acres of other property.

To the golf course industry's benefit, he chose the golf course superintendent's profession. From there he moved on to the Turnberry Isles position in 1975 and The Banyan Club in 1980. He is currently the East Coast sales manager for Toro Liquid Ag.

Away from the world of golf greens and magazines, Dan's character blazes even brighter with acts and deeds of great service and sacrifice. Dan's wife Irene says that she "was first attracted to Dan because of the way he treated others with a real sense of fairness and respect. This fairness and respect has not diminished over the 42 years we have been married."

For example, Dan and Irene started a sharing group in their church 15 years ago for people who are afflicted by the disease of drug and alcohol abuse. The group is called Crossover, and it min-

They have always been upbeat, optimistic, enthusiastic, energized, humble, thankful, and reverent, always focused on what they can do for the other person rather than their own needs. I have very few personal heroes in my life, but Dan Jones is certainly one of them.

Max Brown, Ph.D.



Dan Jones, CGCS (left) with his assistant superintendent Tim Enoch at the Banyan Golf Club. Dan has mentored many young assistants over his 33 year career. Coincidentally, current presidents Mike Perham, CGCS of the Florida GCSA and Scott Wahlin, CGCS of the Florida Turfgrass Association are both former Jones assistants. Photo by Mark Jarrell.

isters to the whole family, because when one family member suffers, they all suffer. This sharing group is based on the Bible, which is where the 12 steps of AA originated. Responsibility, confidentiality, and prayer are stressed in the group.

Dan has also served for 12 years on the board of directors of Dunklin Memorial Camp, a Christian city of refuge for men with drug and alcohol problems. There are 75 men currently at the camp, and it is 75 percent self-sustaining. Dan is working on starting an aquaculture program to go along with Dunklin's cattle, citrus, lumber mill, bakery, vegetables, canning, and tree nursery industries.

Having known Dan for as long as anyone in the business, Max Brown has this to say about him: "I have

watched Dan and Irene deal with severe personal challenges over the 33 years I have known them, many of which would have brought most of us to our knees. I have also watched them excel with great success in most of their endeavors. They have always been upbeat, optimistic, enthusiastic, energized, humble, thankful, and reverent, always focused on what they can do for the other person rather than their own needs. I have very few personal heroes in my life, but Dan Jones is certainly one of them."

No greater example of Dan's selfless and giving nature can be demonstrated than his sacrifice and devotion to his granddaughters. Dan and Irene have been raising their daughter Denise's children, Jamie and Shayna, ages 9 and 7, for the past seven years due to

Denise's illness. I've seen Dan with those two beautiful little girls on a few occasions, and know their smiles mean more to him than any professional award he could ever receive, and my respect and admiration for him grows immeasurably.

If anyone's life could be described as "exemplary", it would be Dan Jones. If it was for sale, politicians would be lining up to buy it and tout as their own. As for those of us who have had the honor and the privilege of knowing Dan, he has set high standards of conduct for us to emulate. The challenge to us as individuals is to try our best to be like Dan personally and professionally. The challenge to the Florida GCSA is to create a special award in Dan's name that will reflect the values and legacy that he has left us. 