

NOW is the Time to Thank Your Mentors

Taking the High Road Was Dietsch's Greatest Lesson

BY JOEL JACKSON, CGCS

Perhaps the beginning of a new millennium is a time for all of us to look back and thank those people who helped us get to these places in our lives and careers where we can look forward with hope and promise to a new age.

For me it is a long-overdue time to pay tribute and honor to the person who set me on the path which led me to the golf industry which has been so good to me and my family.

My mentor in this profession was William H. Dietsch, Jr. Bill was a golf course architect who never got the accolades and headlines that he deserved. He did however, earn the admiration and respect of those whose lives he touched. Bill is listed in *The Golf Course*, the seminal work on golf course architecture by Geoffrey Cornish and Ronald Whitten.

Bill was one of my heroes in the golf business. Not only for the obvious reasons that I learned the hands-on part of working on a course from him, but for an even greater lesson he taught me. From him I learned to always take the high road in business.

He was a model of honesty and integrity in a business that could lend itself to wheeling and dealing. He staked his reputation on his work, and those who hired him reaped the benefits of his work ethic. He was a perfect model for a young person being exposed to the golf industry.

There were others who appreciated Bill's way of conducting himself in the business. Here's just a couple of comments about Bill's performance:

"...Bill's professionalism and attention to detail were traits that impressed me. But I was not the only one who appreciated his sincere and diligent pursuit of excellence in his work. He did not have a big ego. What he had was a tre-



Bill loved to go fishing! William H. Dietsch, Jr. Friend and mentor (1928-1999).

mendous pride in the work he performed for a client.

"...his work is exemplary and he is able to transform ideas into reality accu-

rately and within the budget parameters. Of particular importance is his willingness to listen to our opinion and give it proper consideration. Mr. Dietsch is a credit to his profession and can provide all the required services to conceive, plan, and construct golf courses. I recommend his services highly.

THOMAS J. COX

Executive Vice President
Pasadena Y&CC, 1976

"...While completing the construction of the 10 greens (Miami Springs GC), I was able to work closely with Mr. Dietsch. I was thoroughly pleased with his cooperative manner, diligence and personal overseeing the work and the ways he assisted in the work being done. He was on the job over 90 percent of his time; always concentrating on having the work absolutely perfect."

PAUL TURCOTTE

Superintendent of Golf
City of Miami, 1981

I first met Bill when I was in high school. I worked for him one summer when he was building the Apollo Beach GC south of Tampa in 1959-60. I cut my teeth on the golf course business before

A Solid Foundation

Bill received a solid foundation in golf course design and construction supervision, especially in greens shaping while working 12 years for legendary golf course architect Robert Trent Jones from the mid 1950s to 1967. Some of the courses that bear Bill's mark:

- Upper Montclair CC, NJ
- Green Spring Valley Hunt Club, Garrison, Md.
- Wilmington CC (South) Wilmington, Del.
- Arcola CC, NJ
- Birmingham CC, Ala.
- Chattahoochee CC, Ga.
- Apollo Beach GC
- Country Club of Miami (East & West)
- Ponte Vedra GC 9 hold addition
- The Homestead Hotel (Cascades Course - Lower), Va.
- Otter Creek GC, Ind.
- Offutt AFB (SAC HQ), Neb.
- Turtle Point CC, Ala.
- Broadmoor Hotel GC (West) Col.
- Fountain Valley CC, Virgin Islands
- The Highlands CC, Mich.
- Corpus Christi CC, Tex.
- River Bend CC, Ga.
- Fairfield CC, Conn.
- Albany CC, NY
- Bellereve CC, Mo.
- Tuxedo Park GC, NY

Impressive Body of Work

Bill performed either golf course design and construction, supervision, remodeling, consulting or maintenance services on the following courses while owning his own business. D - design; SC - supervised construction; R - remodel/redesign; CO - consulting; M - maintenance.

CC of Miami, 200 bunkers, (East & West Courses), Miami. (R)

Arawac GC, (9 holes), Nassau, BWI (R)

Coral Springs CC, Coral Springs (D & CO)

Calder Race Track, Ft. Lauderdale (CO)

CC of Miami, (18 hole South Course), Miami (D & SC)

Delray Dunes CC, (18 holes) Delray Beach (Co-design & SC)

Torrey Pines GC, San Diego (CO)

Fountainbleu CC, Miami (SC)

Oriole G & TC of Margate, (18 holes), Margate (D & SC)

Lakeview GC, (18 holes), Delray Beach (D)

Villages of Oriole, (9 holes), Margate (D)

Town & Country Real Estate, (18 holes), Winter Haven (D)

Tamiami GC, (18 holes), Miami (D). **

Pines GC, (9 holes), Hollywood (R & SC)

Mariner Sands CC, (18 holes), Stuart (SC)**

Pasadena Y&CC, (18 holes), St. Petersburg (R & SC)**

Still Hollow GC, (18 holes), Lehigh Acres (D)

Sunrise Lakes CC, (9 holes), Sunrise (D & M)

Villages of Oriole, (18 holes), Delray Beach (D & SC)

International Gardens CC, (18 holes), Miami (D & SC)

Duck Key Land Sales, Inc. (9 holes), Duck Key (D)

Development Corp of America, (18 holes), Clearwater (D)

College of the Virgin Islands, (9 holes), St. Thomas (R)

Bay Beach GC, (9 holes), Ft. Myers (R)

W.B. Homes Inc., (9 holes), Sunrise (D, SC & M)

Rolling Hills CC, (9 hole addition), Davie (D & SC)

Miami Springs GC, (10 greens), Miami Springs (R & SC)

Cypress Lakes GC, (18 holes), West Palm Beach (D & SC)

Meridian GC, (9 holes), Lantana (D)

Beachview GC, (9 hole addition), Sanibel (D)

Lake Worth GC, (back 9 holes), Lake Worth R & SC)

Negril Hills GC, (18 holes), Jamaica (CO)

Qingdao and Jimo Projects, China (CO)

Holiday GC, (9 hole addition), Panama City Beach (D, SC & M)

San San Resort (9 holes), Port Antonio, Jamaica (D & SC)

**I worked with Bill on these projects 1971 - 1973.

triplex greens mowers and utility vehicles were invented and I learned the lore of the golf business as he told stories about the many projects he had been on while working with Robert Trent Jones, the leading architect of the time.

Some 10 years later, I would find myself in a straw hat wearing a hatchet on my belt, tromping through the bushes as Bill's assistant after he started his own golf course design business. I worked with him on three projects, but the fuel crisis of 1973 put a hold on a lot of construction projects. He carried me on the payroll for several months and helped me land a maintenance position at Pembroke Pines. And the rest is history.

I will treasure all my memories of working with Bill and just keeping in touch over the years with him and his

wife Rosemary. He could tell some tall tales and we had our fair share of laughs. Bill was an outdoorsman and he loved to fish. I'm glad I got the chance to take a few trips to some of his secret spots in Biscayne Bay, the Keys and his "snook hole" on the Little Manatee River.

This past September a mutual friend of many years, Ralph White called to tell me that Bill passed away from cancer. Many of you may never have heard of Bill Dietsch, but his hand touched a lot of golf courses, and in so doing has also in some small way touched your lives.

Thank you, Bill, for sharing your wit and wisdom with me. You helped make me a better person and a successful superintendent. To all of you, take some time and call or write your mentor and thank them while you still have a chance.

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