

Memorial Day

Green Side Up



Joel Jackson, CGCS
Editor

I would never attempt to equate honoring members of our profession to the purpose of our national Memorial Day, but it does strike me that we do often neglect to take a moment to recall and remember those individuals and groups who pioneered the way for the status we enjoy in today's golf industry.

As the faces of our ranks grow younger every year and participation in the various local associations is flat or declining, I wonder sometimes if the younger generation fully appreciates the time and effort made by their

predecessors, and I wonder what will be the fate of our profession if they fail to get engaged in their associations beyond earning a paycheck.

On this Memorial Day I want to remember those who went before me. Those who guided my early footsteps, provided inspiration and leadership, fought the battles, and sacrificed time and effort so I could enjoy working in a robust, respected and satisfying profession.

South Florida GCSA - It all began with them in 1939. They

were the first group of superintendents to organize and hold formal meetings. They held on through the depression and the war years and reorganized in the 1970's. They started the *South Florida Green* magazine in 1975, and unselfishly helped it transition to our statewide publication, the *Florida Green* in 1980.

Dan Jones - The first time I met Dan was in the late 1970s. He was the speaker at one of our Central Florida Chapter meetings. His topic was "Professionalism and Image!" See, image isn't just a current initiative. Superintendents have been fighting for respect for a long time. It's an ongoing initiative that takes your involvement. Dan and his wife Irene also wrote, edited and assembled the *Florida Green* magazine for 14 years. They turned their home into a publishing house long before desktop publishing was invented. Dan is our editor emeritus and will always hold a place in our magazine's masthead.

William H. Dietsch, Jr. - Bill was my first boss in the golf business. I was a high school senior working on the Robert Trent Jones-designed Apollo Beach Golf Course. I learned my first lessons in golf history, design and maintenance

from Bill. Later I would work with him as his field assistant when he started his own design company. From him I learned ethical business practices. We were life-long friends despite the 10-year age difference. Through Bill I also met Ralph White who worked for Southern Grassing. Ralph became my connection to the rest of the turfgrass industry.

Dr. G. C. Horn - University of Florida's Granville Horn put the Florida turfgrass industry on the map. Besides matriculating from the Southern Mill Creek Company's week-long turfgrass boot camp run by Dr. Horn, I got to ride with him on his consultation visits at Disney's Lake Buena Vista Club, when I was an assistant superintendent. My personal on-site, hands-on, turf tutor. What a helpful experience in my growth as a turf manager.

Tim Hiers, CGCS - Tim was the first president of the Florida GCSA. He leads by example. He walks the talk and became our leader for pro-activism on issues facing our profession. His advocacy for doing the right thing whether it's environmental stewardship, maintenance-building design or cutting-edge cultural practices always inspired me to do better.

For the retired superintendents out there, thank you for carrying the torch for the rest of us back in the days when you had to enter the clubhouse through the back door.

To my contemporaries, thanks for making the journey with me to this point. Throughout our careers we have probably witnessed the most sweeping changes in golf course management. We have tried to honor the traditions established by the pioneers, while advancing our profession into the new millennium.

To the next generation of superintendents - As you fill the ranks replacing those who went before, you are inheriting more than a job title and a salary. The history of the profession is now your history and your bloodlines run all the way back to Scotland and Old Tom Morris.

Your status is the product of decades of evolution of the profession. You are the descendants of a special breed of person who works with their hands, but has elevated the position of superintendent from journeyman to professional. You have stepped into very big shoes that have walked long hard miles to bring you to this place. Honor their journey and make your own contributions to the future through service to your associations.