



South Florida Chapter Past President Jim Walker never gave up his love for baseball even though he never made it to "The Show." Much to our benefit, he traded in running bases to running golf courses. In tribute to his leadership, the SFGCSA presented Walker with the FGCSA President's Award for Lifetime Service.

SFGCSA PRESIDENTS AWARD

It Has Been A Long Road From Night Water Man

An Autobiography

The road leading to my receiving the 2001 FGCSA President's Award from the South Florida GCSA began 31 years ago at the Pecan Valley Country Club in San Antonio, Tex. I was the assistant irrigation technician (night water man) plugging in quick couplers and doing course prep work.

Pecan Valley hosted the PGA Championship in 1968 and it was a great place for a golf hound like me to begin my career. The course was a J. Press Maxwell design and I consider myself lucky to have run or worked at many courses that had great architects.

After Pecan Valley, came the Ocala Golf Club where I worked under Jim Yancey, older brother to PGA great Bert Yancey, the course manager and golf professional. He had hired Jim to be a working superintendent and the experience there was great. Bert hosted tour players Frank Beard and Deane Beamon who came down in the winter and played until the tour started in California each year. Being around those guys gave me much insight on what top players thought were important in course conditioning.

Two and a half years later I left Ocala GC to become the assistant superintendent at the Silver Springs Shores GC also in Ocala. One reason for making the move was that Mel Sligh, the superintendent, was a UF graduate who had studied under Dr. G.C. Horn and had a lot of knowl-

edgeable friends in the area. I drove Mel nuts asking technical questions, but I'm glad I did. About a year later Mel left for the Palma Ceia CC job in Tampa, and there I was, the superintendent of a first-class private club. The course is a Desmond Muirhead track spread out over 250 acres with water and sand everywhere.

In 1976 I went back to San Antonio and worked for Watson Distributing. They were the Jacobsen, Cushman and Ryan distributor for all of Texas. Selling orange and green iron for a couple of years was another learning experience I was happy to have had. While there, San Antonio hosted the GCSAA National Convention and meeting the factory engineers and designers was very educational.

Two years later I returned to Florida and the Miami area where I was born and raised. While growing up in Miami I had played golf and baseball for Hialeah High School. I attended Miami Dade Junior College and Valdosta State College on a baseball scholarship and, in my senior year, I was on the NCAA Division 2A National Championship team. I was MVP for the series going 8 for 11 at the plate with three home runs, a triple and a double. I got looks from the Chicago Cubs and Boston Red Sox after college, but my fastball was too slow and major league pitching is a world of difference from college ball.

For the past 23 years, I have been the manager or superintendent at various times at the Key Biscayne, Palmetto, Briar Bay and Greynolds Park golf courses for the Miami-Dade County Parks Department. It was also in 1978 that I met Alan Weitzel, my long time friend and sometimes boss. Those 23 years have been interesting to say the least. I'm a Howard Cosell type of guy so politics was never my bag. I give Alan a lot of credit for helping me see the importance of junior golf. Over the years we did a lot of work bringing this wonderful game to kids in South Florida. We also started a golf league which is still going strong 23 years later.

One of the things I'm most proud of is the people who started their golf maintenance careers with me. At Briar Bay they included: Carlos McKeon, Eric Knudsen, Robert Wethy and Susi (Goldstein) Walker. At Greynolds Park a long-haired, skinny kid right out of college named Joe Pantaleo mowed and fertilized his first bermudagrass with me.

With six years to go before retirement, I still enjoy the golf course business. I have served on the South Florida GCSA board since 1994 and was president in 1998 to 2000. Susi and I live in the Kendall area and besides playing golf, I'm an ardent audiophile. While all this golf stuff was going on I was a pretty fair jazz musician whose band played at the American Pavilion during the 1964 World's Fair in New York...but that's another story.

Jim Walker, GCS Greynolds Golf Course

NFGCSA PRESIDENTS AWARD

Amelia Island's Hill Helped Bring Chapter into FGCSA



Ron Hill, golf course superintendent at the Amelia Island Golf Resort was recognized for his 30 years of service to North Florida golf by the North Florida Chapter. Presenting the FGCSA President's Award to Hill are NFGCSA President Andy Maguire (left) and Vice President Glen Klauk.

Ron Hill was honored on July 19 by the North Florida Golf Course Superintendent's Association for his 30 years of service to golf industry in northeast Florida.

In recognition for that service Hill was presented with the FGCSA's 2001 President's Award for Lifetime Achievement at the chapter's July meeting. Ron is currently the golf course superintendent of Amelia Island Plantation, which is an affiliated division of the Harbour Town Corporation. He has been continuously employed by the Harbour Town Corp. for the past 30 years.

After graduating from Lake City Community College in 1972, Hill began his career in the golf business with Harbour Town. In 1973 he became active in the Florida-Georgia GCSA. By 1976 he had risen to the office of chapter president. He assisted in the transformation of the

Florida-Georgia GCSA into the North Florida chapter of the Florida GCSA in 1979.

In addition to helping develop the local organization, Ron has had many of his assistant superintendents and on-the-job training students go on to become successful leaders in the golf industry over the years. Some of these recognizable names include: Bobby Weed, Tim Hiers, Barry Collett, Bill Griffith and Bruce Blanchard.

Ron has also enjoyed a fairly successful amateur golf career. In 1978 and 1979 he made it to the match play rounds in the United States Amateur Championships. He was the Jacksonville area medalist for the 1979 Amateur qualifier. Other golfing accomplishments include member of several Florida GCSA teams competing in the GCSAA Golf Championships and being on at least one national title team; past winner of the Crowfoot Open; participating in the Gate Senior Tournament in Jacksonville in 1997.

We salute Ron Hill, CGCS for his commitment to education, golf and in promoting the golf industry through his leadership. Congratulations Ron!

*Glen Klauk
Secretary*

North Florida GCSA

FGCSA GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Ondo Defends Title in 3-Way Playoff at Southern Dunes



Joe Ondo, CGCS also defending his individual title at the FGCSA Golf Championship by winning a three-way playoff. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Steve Bernard, Joe Pantaleo and Joe Ondo all posted scores of 75 on the windswept Southern Dunes golf course in Haines City as the 6th Annual FGCSA Golf Championship narrowly averted a