An Original Poem

Clint Smallridge, CGCS

This is an original poem composed by Clint Smallridge, CGCS, Banyan Golf Club, longtime friend and admirer of Mr. Lee. Clint wrote it especially for Joe and read it to the assemblage at the dinner party.

Mr. Joe Lee, A Man Among Men
Oh what a joy it has been
To spend a career with such a good friend
In the Bahamas with just rocks and trees
You had the answer, get soil from the sea
The stories you tell are funny indeed
But contained within there is a lesson to heed
You always set the standard, a lofty goal indeed
I knew you were watching, that is why I had to succeed
When you came to visit at Mullet Bay
Again you had the answer, move that hotel out of our way
With Mrs. Jinny and Betty at your side
You weave beauty and wonder over the countrywide
Golf is your business but people your passion
Relationships, friendships, business deals all around the world to fashion
You once told me “Always give the other guy a chance to be a gentleman”
But it was you my friend that extended the helping hand
So it’s time for special wishes, and only the best will do
For when it comes to special friends, the very best is you!

Clint Smallridge, CGCS

Joe Lee, left, with Ron Whitten, senior editor of architecture for Golf Digest and Golf World magazines and author of “Gentleman Joe Lee, 50 Years of Golf” at Lee’s book-signing dinner at Palm Beach National GC in November.

The recent HBO miniseries, “Band of Brothers” swept the consciousness of the current generation as the story of the tremendous human sacrifice by this band of World War II citizen-soldiers was brought to the screen. The story of the tremendous human sacrifice by this band of World War II citizen-soldiers was brought to the screen. In 2002 our senses were assaulted by the loss of no less than seven of our comrades-in-arms: Chuck Almony, Jr., Bill Cowing, Tom Crawford, Chip Fowkes, Joe Korwinski, Mike Cantwell and the last brother to leave us on Dec. 6, Jeff Hayden. Each was known to us in different ways as a classmate, mentor, leader, friend, contributor, volunteer, associate, buddy, pal and peer. Their spheres of influence range from local to state and national in nature and each was just as important in its own context as their lives interacted with ours in common concerns and achievements.

The title, “Band of Brothers” came from Shakespeare’s play Henry the Fifth. In honor of our fallen comrades I share with you an edited version of the passage which gave rise to the title:

He which hath no stomach to this fight, Let him depart; his passport shall be made... We would not die in that man’s company: But he that outlives that day shall see old age... And strip his sleeve and show his scars... And say, “These wounds I had on Crispin’s Day.”...This story shall the good man teach his son: And Crispin’s Day shall ne’er go by. From this day to the ending of the world, But we in it shall be remembered; We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he today who sheds his blood with me Shall be my brother...”

Though our daily battles are far less rigorous than those heroes of another age, they are no less a measure of our abilities and our loyalties. In that regard, we owe it to each other to be prepared, to be competent, to be diligent and to make sacrifices so that our unique profession lives on in honor. We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.

Golf is your business but people your passion. We have all had to make a commitment of time and effort to ensure that we fulfill our managerial mission requirements.

For when it comes to special friends, the very best is you!