



WESCO TURF HISTORY

By Billy Gamble

(Editor's note: As we continue to celebrate the 40th anniversary year of the *Florida Green* magazine, we salute the Toro Company, the longest continuous supporter of the magazine, with this history of Wesco Turf. Thanks to Billy Gamble for sharing the information and photos for this article. In coming issues we will continue to profile the companies who support the *Florida Green*.)

Wesco Turf, Inc. was created in 1987 when William (Bill) Gamble III purchased Wesco Zaun from the Toro Company. Bill joined Wesco with a background in the hardware business, most recently as vice president of sales and marketing, and part of the leveraged buyout group that bought McCulloch Chain Saw from Black

and Decker. Prior to that, Bill had a long career with Rockwell and Porter-Cable power tools.

Bill came to Wesco with a simple philosophy. If you take care of your customers and associates, the business will take care of itself. Superior parts and customer service has been the hallmark of our company. We hire great people and put them in the right job. We manage to have some fun as well.

'Pride in excellence' summarizes our company culture. It sounds cliché until you learn that Wesco has won more than 100 awards from our vendors, including 'distributor of excellence' from Toro four times. Our people want and expect to win. Wesco's business has evolved from a consumer-product-based business reliant on the power-equipment dealer channel

to one that is largely golf- and grounds-driven.

The explosive home development growth in Southwest Florida over the past 20 years fueled an unprecedented number of golf courses being built. Wesco was in the right place at the right time... offering the right products and services.

In 1998, Bill and his brother John, bought an adjacent Toro distributorship, Zaun Equipment, renaming the company, Wesco Turf Supply, Inc., with locations in Lake Mary and Jacksonville. John had his own storied career at Ingersoll-Rand as Group Vice President of the Hardware & Security Products business. Wesco Turf Supply benefited through John's leadership and the processes and culture learned at Wesco Turf, Inc. Together, the businesses grew consistently for the next 10 years.

THE WESCO TURF TIME LINE

1932 Charles "Charlie" Zaun founds Zaun Equipment in Jacksonville, Florida.

1981 East and West Florida territories split. Zaun Equipment retains the East portion of the territory. The West portion of the territory becomes Wesco-Zaun, under the ownership of John "Jack" Cantu, former president of The Toro Company.



1954 Ben Reemelin purchases Zaun Equipment and takes on the Toro line. As Florida's development brings burgeoning markets. West Coast branches are later established by Duke Newton in St. Petersburg and in Fort Myers by Jimmy Reemelin.



The Wesco Turf, Inc. regional headquarters: The picture on the left is the Sarasota office; the one above is the Lake Mary office. Submitted by Billy Gamble

In 2008, Bill and John consolidated the two companies to optimize the assets and create greater synergies among the selling divisions, operations, service, etc. Today, Wesco Turf, Inc. proudly represents Toro, Club Car utility vehicles, Bernhard reel and bedknife grinders, Lastec mowers, Salsco turf rollers, Rahn turf groomers, Golf Lift, Flowtronex pump stations, ProGro waste water treatment systems, Paige irrigation, American Flow Control, Clow gate valves, Harco ductile iron and PVC fittings, Lasco swing joints and slip fittings, Nibco valves, Ametek and Carson valve boxes, Baldwin filters, and a few other commercial product lines.

The business philosophy and customer-driven culture remains unchanged from the seeds that Bill Gamble planted back in 1987. Gamble said, "We take care of our customers and associates, and the business continues to grow."



Leaders of the Wesco Turf family, Bill and Billy Gamble. Submitted by Billy Gamble



The Wesco Turf service shop in Sarasota. They take care of new set ups, repairs, warranty work, loaner and rental equipment maintenance and pre-owned equipment reconditioning. Photo submitted by Billy Gamble

1986 Ben Reemelin sells Zaun Equipment to Tom Bruns. In August, Wesco-Zaun moves its headquarters to Sarasota.

1991 Zaun Equipment moves its corporate offices to Lake Mary, leaving a branch location in Jacksonville.

1998 The East territory of Zaun Equipment is sold to Bill Gamble and the name is changed to Wesco Turf Supply, Inc., headquartered in Lake Mary, Florida, with John Gamble as President.

2008 Wesco Turf, Inc. and Wesco Turf Supply, Inc. are merged into one corporation. Thus, the two distribution houses have come full circle and are reunited.

1987 Following the death of Jack Cantu, The Toro Company purchases Wesco-Zaun and changes the name to New Wesco. Five months later, Bill Gamble purchases New Wesco, changes the name to Wesco Turf, Inc., and sets the company on course to become Toro's premier distributorship.

1990

2000

2010