It's all in the family for Joneses 'first family of golf architecture'

The first family of golf architects is the label generally applied to the Jones clan. Father Robert, and sons Robert Jr. and Rees, have designed and built hundreds of courses throughout the world. Many talented architects are designing gorgeous courses throughout the world. However, any discussion involving course designers often touches on those three families.

Two generations of Joneses, Dyes and Fazios are currently in the business. Why have families rather than individuals become the big names in the field?

Rees Jones believes it is because there are no schools or college programs of golf course architecture. It remains a craft rather than a profession.

"You learn golf course architecture by doing it," he said. "It's natural that a father will pass it down to a son and take the time to give him an opportunity to get into it. It's much harder for someone outside because it takes four or five years in the field to learn what you're doing. That's why it's still a craft."

With that in mind, here's a look at the families Jones, Dye and Fazio.

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Hunger for golf bred into Pete and Alice Dye's sons

"I was born and bred to design golf courses and I had the two best teachers in the business," said P.B. Dye, son of Pete and Alice Dye.

Pete, the elder statesman of the Dye clan, could make the same claim. His father, Paul, designed and built Urbana CC in the 1920s.

"He played golf and was very interested in grasses," remembered Pete of his father. "But it was a hobby for him, so I never looked at it (golf course architecture) as a profession."

It wasn't until the late 1950s that Pete left a successful insurance career to become a full-time architect. Today five Dyes (Pete, Alice, sons P.B. and Perry and Pete's brother Roy) are in the business.

Pete, 64, in the patriarch and the name most people know in the male-dominated world of golf course architecture. But Alice, 62, has had a hand in nearly all of Pete's designs.

"I'll be working all day on a bunker and she'll come by around 3 or 4 p.m. and say, 'Why did you do this or that?' It helps to have someone you have tremendous respect for to take a fresh look at things. Usually what I've done is easy to modify and I'll make the change," said Pete.

Pete and Alice met while both were attending Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla. They were married in 1950 and moved to her hometown of Indianapolis.

Both embarked on successful insurance careers and worked on their golf games. Pete won the 1958 Indiana men's amateur and twice finished second. Alice became a legend, claiming seven Indiana amateur titles, three Florida amateur titles, five Western Senior championships and two USGA Women's Senior Amateur Championships.

Alice left the insurance business in 1962 to raise their family. Pete continued until 1999.

Robert Trent Jones Sr. was the only designer at the time with any sort of professional status, according to Alice. Generally the job of laying out a course was turned over to a greenskeeper, who was paid about $2 an hour.

"Jones elevated golf course architecture to a profession. Jack Nicklaus (who opened his architectural firm in 1974) raised it to a business where you could make a decent living," said Pete.

Fortunately for the Dyes, who were raising Perry and P.B., they still had checks coming in from Pete's past insurance sales. That helped carry them through the early years when they were developing low-budget courses.

Pete and Alice traveled the great courses of Scotland in 1963 and incorporated many of the features they witnessed — small greens, undulating fairways, pot bunkers, etc. Continued on page 25

Robert Trent Jones Jr. was the front, with sons Rees, left, and Robert Jr.