Seay accepts Don Rossi Award for Palmer

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Saying "some of the accolades we get as architects start right in this room," Ed Seay stood in for Arnold Palmer who received the Don Rossi Humanitarian Award from the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA).

A partner in Arnold Palmer Golf Design who has worked with Palmer since 1971, Seay told the annual GCBAA banquet here that he first spoke to the organization in its fledgling stages in 1973. "Then you were not recognized much," he said. "Today you are not recognized as you should be — as the backbone of our industry — but put yourselves on your back. You have made it. You're here and all of us architect and owners are very proud of your efforts."

In presenting the award in absentia to Palmer, outgoing GCBA President Paul Eldredge of Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. cited the Golf Hall of Famer as "the one who kicked off the game four things: small greens, hard greens, fast greens and narrow fairways." He lamented that an entire field of golfers too often will play a hole in the same way. For that reason, for instance, Venturi doesn't like island greens because "they don't give you multiple choice... It doesn't give you the chance to protect a lead."

The annual Old Tom Morris Award honors individuals who have made a lifetime commitment to the game of golf, to promote the welfare of the game in a manner and style exemplified by the award's namesake, a four-time British Open champion and a golf course architect, greenskeeper and professional at Old St. Andrews in Scotland. "Looking at the life of Ken Venturi you can see many parallels with the life of Old Tom," said outgoing GCBSA President Paul McGinnis. "They both met obstacles, and both overcame setbacks to find success on and off the course. Old Tom Morris had a passion for the game that he exuberantly shared with others so that, too, could enjoy his experiences. Ken Venturi has said: "If there is anyone who appreciates a group of people more than I appreciate [you], I don't know where they are — because you have helped protect the integrity and the tradition of the game of golf. And I might add that I feel that you have an obligation to continue..." Continued on page 41