

Seay accepts Don Rossi Award for Palmer

By MARK LESLIE

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 GCBA banquet here that he first spoke to the organization in its fledging 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 pat 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

of golf similar to Don Rossi kicking off our organization." Rossi was a founder of GCBA and served as its executive vice president when he died six years ago.

In a prerecorded, videotaped message, Palmer alluded to the approximately 200 golf courses on which he has been a design consultant and



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 con-

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Golf Course News publisher Charlie von Brecht (right) presents award to Bill Kubly

Landscapes' Kubly credits hardworking staff

By MARK LESLIE

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Golf Course Builder of the Year Landscapes Unlimited earned its award because of "the hard work of our staff," said its president.

Accepting the honor from Charles von Brecht, publisher of the sponsoring *Golf Course News*, Bill Kubly said his company "works hard all year to provide a quality product. I want to thank the architects, suppliers and distributors who help us all have this opportunity to have a wonderful livelihood."

President Howard Barnes accepted *Golf Course News'*

Best Small Builder of the Year Award for Quality Grassing & Services, and President Geoffrey Corlett accepted a special Honorable Mention Small Builder Award for Turf Drain, Inc.

The Builder of the Year Award has been presented for nine years and the Small Builder of the Year for two. Wadsworth Golf Construction Co., Paul Clute and SAJO as well as Landscapes Unlimited have won previous Best Builder honors. MacCurrach Golf Construction was the first winner of the Small Builder citation in 1997.

Venturi puts maintenance into perspective, wins Old Tom Morris

By MARK LESLIE

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Golf course conditioning, not playing equipment, has created the biggest change in the game of golf, according to Ken Venturi.

Venturi, here to accept the Old Tom Morris Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, told a press conference: "The courses are so perfect. [In the past] you had to have imagination. You had to create something that wasn't there. Now, look at Augusta National and you can putt on the fairways. That has been one of the greatest changes in golf. You can talk about equipment. But I'm talking about conditions. That has made the game much, much different."

Saying he is inspired by tradition, Venturi spoke of Ireland and Scotland where "they play 'down' golf instead of 'up' golf."

"The ball is made to run," he said. "You can never make a green hard enough."

Irish and Scottish golf, he said, give the golfer multiple choices. "It allows you to use your imagination."

"Ask good shot-makers what they like," he said, "and they like

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, groundskeeper 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 GCSAA 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 they, too, could enjoy his experiences. Ken Venturi has

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ADA an issue at GCSAA

By BOB SPIWAK

ANAHEIM, Calif. — As the future of tour golfer Casey Martin was being decided in an Oregon courtroom, a panel was discussing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at the GCSAA conference here.

As the lawyers argued in Eugene, the panel and attendees were watching a video news replay, headlined with, "Golf course cares more about grass than obeying the law."

The news replay was presented by Steve Gervais of Suncor Development Co. in Arizona, who was one of the panelists moderated by GCSAA Government Relations Counsel Cynthia Kelly Smith.

Other speakers included Greg Jones of the Association of Disabled American Golfers, Peggy Greenwell of the Access Board (a branch of the Justice Department), Jack Andre of the National Park Service, and Jerry Coldiron, superintendent at Lassing Pointe GC in Kentucky where a high profile situation involving a disabled golfer had recently been resolved (*GCN* December '97 and January '98).

Smith led the discussion with an explanation of the

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Seay accepts

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to do that and to do it in the spirit that you have done — to build a golf course and build it correctly is very, very important.”

Seay, a former president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, said: “I don’t know how to express to you what we members of the ASGCA feel about your talent, your commit-

ment, your dedication to your job. I’ve worked with half of you in this room and it is a tremendous feeling to know that you go after it the way you do.

“I hope that somewhere along the line every designer, every architect gives the builder the freedom of creativity. I’ve done a little over 300 golf courses now and I can’t remember one course that was built exactly like it was drawn. The talent and the ex-

1998 GCSAA SHOW WRAP UP

pression of your shapers, foremen and superintendents on the job absolutely amaze me.”

Because of environmental constraints, developers don’t get prime land anymore, Seay said, adding: “We get the flood plains and the wetlands that you can’t get into, which makes the job even tougher. I hope you always understand that we appreciate your problem-solving.”

As two examples, he said:

• “Take Ryan Golf. They did a job, Boca West, in Boca Raton. From start to finish they moved 400,000 cubic yards of earth. We remodeled it from tee to green — every tee, every bunker, every fairway. We raised the whole golf course 3 feet. It was amazing. In 199 days they walked off, the job complete.”

‘There is nothing about the game of golf he [Palmer] doesn’t think is sacred.’

—Ed Seay

• “We built 18 holes in the desert, moved 750,000 cubic yards of earth, landscaped \$3 million worth — trees, bushes, shrubs, cart paths, you name it. [Builder] Environmental Golf walked off in 155 days.”

“You in the business understand what that commitment is, that drive to get that done,” Seay said. “That’s a wonderful, wonderful tactic—to take the talent you have in this room. That’s what we’re excited about: your commitment.”

Referring to Palmer’s statement that golf course builders are protecting the integrity and tradition of the game, Seay said: “He takes his job and his obligations to the game of golf seriously. You can’t fail to catch his remark about obligations. He means that. There is nothing about the game of golf he doesn’t think is sacred. He means what he says about tradition. And he wants people to realize how important it is to do your job, to hang in there no matter what and do your job.

“His words, tone and feeling haven’t changed when it comes to tradition.”

PRODUCT WRAP UP

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