

Stand

'People of the Year' recognized for integrity

07

Year In Review



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Out

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

“Whoosh!”

That sound you hear is not of someone driving the green with a Big Bertha in hand. It's the swift sound of another year gone by.

Hence, it's time to pause and reflect on what was 2007, which means it's time for *Golfdom* to distribute its annual awards to recognize certain golf industry individuals for their achievements.

But these awards are not for formal accomplishments, mind you. They're granted to those whose actions reflect character and integrity, the two traits that help define our “People of the Year.”

So let's get to it. Please hold your applause until all awards have been presented. Congratulations to this year's honorees!

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ILLUSTRATION BY: iSTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.

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The “Company Man” Award

BRETT BENTLEY

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
OAKMONT COUNTRY CLUB



Shortly after the U.S. Open ended at Oakmont Country Club last June, Brett Bentley, Oakmont’s first assistant

to superintendent John Zimmers Jr., took some well-deserved time to bask in the glory of the successfully staged tournament. But it wasn’t long — a few minutes actually — before Bentley was thinking about what he had to do the next morning.

“After the trophy presentation,” Bentley says, “I was thinking about what areas of the course we had to water on Monday.”

Is this a guy you want on your maintenance team or what?

The broad-shouldered Bentley stands about 6-foot-5 and looks like he could bench press a fairway mower. His strength is — you guessed it — his work ethic.

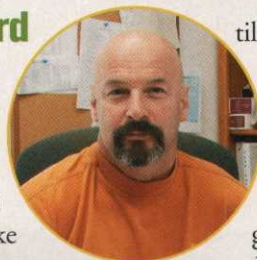
After each tournament round last June, Bentley went home for a short time, showered and returned to work. He snoozed a few hours in the maintenance facility before getting up at 3 a.m. to get back at it.

In case you’re thinking of prying away the 29-year-old from the Oakmont staff ... well ... good luck. Zimmers knows he has a Cadillac in Bentley, and he’s not about to lose him. Bentley, by the way, adores his boss. “John and I make a great team together,” Bentley says. “He has taught me everything I know.”

The “Dr. Phil” Award

DAVE DAVIES

CERTIFIED SUPERINTENDENT
STONEBRAE COUNTRY CLUB



A lot of people who’ve been fired from their jobs would like to sweep the humiliating experience

under the rug and forget about it. But Dave Davies, the certified superintendent of Stonebrae Country Club in Hayward, Calif., doesn’t mind talking about his experience of getting pink-slipped. Davies does so in order to help others who might someday have to endure the devastating experience.

Davies has been on the superintendent speaking circuit with a seminar titled, “Making the Most of Your Today While Preparing for Tomorrow.” In his speech, he talks openly about getting shown the door once upon a time in his career. While he says the firing was based on a number of false accusations, it hurt just the same.

“I’m OK with talking about the trials and tribulations I go through if it’s going to help others,” Davies says. “If a few people can pull something out of that class ... then mission accomplished for me.”

In the seminar, Davies talks in earnest about getting fired because he knows many superintendents work in a vola-

tile industry where they are held to very high standards. They can be doing a great job, ala the professional baseball manager who leads his team to a winning record, and still get canned.

Davies says superintendents need to prepare for a firing in case it happens to them. That means making sure they have their finances in order to withstand a firing. It also means using their networks, from spouses to best friends, to gain emotional support.

Davies also says superintendents need to be prepared for the extreme stress a firing can cause. (Davies lost 20 pounds in eight days after he was fired.) He emphasized how vital it is to recognize the symptoms of stress — sleeplessness, loss of appetite, nausea, headaches, neck pain and having a short fuse — and deal with them, which might include seeking professional help.

Davies says superintendents are fantastic people, but sometimes they are naive about the business of golf.

“Superintendents need to pull their heads out of the sand and understand that what we do is a business, and business decisions get made that have nothing to do with their actual performance,” he says.

The “Impress Upon Us” Award

ED SEAY

CO-FOUNDER OF PALMER GOLF COURSE DESIGN AND RESIDENT GENTLEMAN



I only wish we would have given this award to Ed Seay when he was still alive. But Seay, who died in August at age 69, will keep on making an impression on people even though he’s gone.

Seay, a former Marine who made his mark as Arnold Palmer’s long-time golf course design partner, was just as well-known for being a gentleman. He stood out for his graciousness.

“He was one-of-a-kind as a person,” says Steve Forrest, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, the association that awarded Seay its Distinguished Service Award in 2006.

Seay’s legacy will continue to impress. My guess is the world — and not just the golf world — is a lesser place without him.

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The “Mind Your Own Business” Award

PHIL TRALIES

PRESIDENT AND CEO
CLUB CAR



Yes, Phil Tralies, the president and CEO of Club Car, wants to sell a few golf cars and utility vehicles to grow his company. But Tralies knows his business — and other golf course industry suppliers’ businesses — bank on the golf industry’s growth.

“Without this industry, we have no company,” Tralies says. “Without a company, we don’t have jobs for people out on the line.”

Tralies has taken the matter of growing the game into his own hands. Three years ago he implemented a program at Club Car to offer the company’s 850 Augusta, Ga., employees free golf lessons. Tralies says it’s his responsibility to do his part to help grow the game, especially in an industry where new-player growth has been essentially flat the past few years.

The free lessons, taught by the staff at The First Tee of Augusta, have been a hit. The lessons, which span seven weeks, cost about \$105 per employee. Concerned that employees wouldn’t have a place to play after the lessons and that they might lose interest in the game, Tralies struck a deal with a nearby golf course so the company’s fledgling golfers could take their games to a real course.

Tralies invites other companies, even his competitors, to replicate Club Car’s program. He says he’d be happy to provide them a blueprint of the details.

If other companies and organizations institute similar programs, then noticeable progress could be made in the growing-the-game department, Tralies says.

“They should all be motivated to see this game grow,” he adds.

The “Stand Up and Fight” Award

ALLEN JAMES

PRESIDENT OF RISE



Allen James, president of RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), would be an excellent high-school football coach. The man is a motivator. He’d have the kids sky high and ready to play under the Friday night lights.

As is, James has the members of RISE — producers, suppliers and distributors of specialty pesticides and fertilizers — ready to take on the environmentalists of the world who don’t know fact from fiction when it comes to turfgrass maintenance.

I’ve heard James speak a few times the past few years. His matter-of-fact style of speech combines a touch of cynicism and sarcasm to capture your attention. His gravelly voice helps drive home his message. (Think Bob Dylan singing one of his classic ’60s protest songs, except you can understand the words.)

Toni Bucci, business manager for BASF Professional Turf and Ornamentals, said it best when she remarked that she gets so fired up after hearing James speak that she wants to write a letter to her congressman.

“Without this industry, we have no company. Without a company, we don’t have jobs for people out on the line.”

— Phil Tralies, president and CEO of Club Car

The “Cal Ripken Jr.” Award

STEVE MONA

CEO

THE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



In his 21 years with the Baltimore Orioles, Cal Ripken Jr. didn’t hear many boos from the hometown fans. In his 14 years as CEO of the GCSAA, Steve Mona didn’t hear many boos from golf course superintendents.

Ripken, known as the Iron Man, also played in a record 2,632 straight Major League baseball games — a span of 16 seasons — despite numerous injuries. Amazing.

Mona, also known as the Iron Man, hasn’t missed a day of work in 14 years. Equally amazing.

In a few months, Mona will leave the GCSAA to become CEO of the World Golf Foundation. Superintendents might not have agreed with everything the GCSAA did under Mona’s watch, but most of them will agree the GCSAA is better off now as an association compared to before Mona took over. The same can be said of the Baltimore Orioles organization from the time Ripken arrived in 1981 to when he left in 2001.

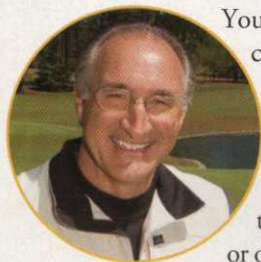
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The “Good Humor” Award

KEN MANGUM

DIRECTOR OF GOLF COURSES
AND GROUNDS
ATLANTA COUNTRY CLUB



You may have crossed paths with Ken Mangum before at an industry meeting or other event.

Mangum, director of golf courses and grounds at the Atlanta Athletic Club, is the well-dressed and well-groomed guy who looks all business, especially if he's giving one of his presentations on team building or golf course management.

But underneath that layer of seriousness lurks a jokester that would have made the Marx Brothers proud. Mangum has a smart sense of humor and uses it to keep the atmosphere loose at the Atlanta Country Club, a private club with 2,000 family members and a lot of opinions. One time, on the bus ride home from a managerial staff camping trip, Mangum used his wife's red fingernail polish to paint the nails of his general manager, Chris Borders, after Borders dozed off.

“I've been known to do a few mischievous things around here,” Mangum says with a sly smile.

Make no mistake: Mangum is not Larry, Curly and Moe tending turf. He's a very capable superintendent with a stellar reputation.

He just feels humor is a good way to cope with the pressures that come with the job.

The “Einsteins” Award

THE GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE INDUSTRY'S MANY
RESEARCHERS AND DEVELOPERS



I've toured the research facilities of the industry's major chemical companies and watched white-coated scientists fiddle with formulations. I've visited the testing facilities at the top irrigation companies and witnessed engineers at work on water-saving gadgets. I've seen production lines in operation at mower and utility vehicle manufacturing plants and have come away amazed at the level of detail involved with the making of these mighty machines.

Where would the golf course maintenance industry be without its researchers and developers? These unsung heroes don't get nearly the credit they deserve.

You've probably heard the statistic that human beings use only 10 percent of their brains. That might be true for some of us, but it's a bunch of neuro nonsense as it applies to the creators who make the golf course maintenance world spin.

“So seldom do we get to say ‘thank you’ to our soldiers for the great and important work they're undertaking.”

— Diana Hoffman, Customer Service Representative, Standard Golf

The “Rally the Troops” Award

DIANA HOFFMAN
STANDARD GOLF



Diana Hoffman works in customer service for Standard Golf in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Recently, she went above and beyond the call of duty.

Hoffman has a warm spot in her heart for the troops serving their country in Iraq. When she was provided the opportunity to do something for them recently, she embraced the chance.

Hoffman received a phone call from the father of an American army soldier who was seeking replacement parts for a Standard Golf ball washer that had been donated previously to his son's unit for a driving range built on the base, located west of Baghdad.

Hoffman assured the soldier's father the parts would be in the mail soon. But as she talked more with him about the driving range in the desert, she realized it wasn't built just so soldiers could work on their games while away from home.

Hoffman learned it was much more important than that.

The driving range is operated by the Psychological Operations Task Force (POTF)-10, commanded by Wayne Tasler, whose father called Hoffman.

The range was built so soldiers could go there to decompress before and after stressful missions.

When Hoffman learned this important nugget from Tasler's father, she wanted to do more than just send ball washer parts. So she went to her boss to see if Standard Golf could donate products to the unit. He told Hoffman “the sky was the limit,” so she gathered up signage, flags, hole cutters, cups and “whatever they might need for the range.”

Then Hoffman recruited a Standard Golf distributor, Hornung's Golf Products, to help with the cause. Hornung's agreed to donate such items as golf clubs, golf balls, red, white and blue head covers, putting greens, mats and tees.

“So seldom do we get to say ‘thank you’ to our soldiers for the great and important work they're undertaking,” Hoffman says.

Mission accomplished. ■