



Constructive Growth Under President Scottie Hines

By Dave Kaz

The mark of any good leader is the ability to listen, guide and administer while understanding the confines of his or her authority. Those qualities have shined through during the tenure of the MGCSA's current president, Scottie Hines, CGCS, Windsong Farm Golf Club.

Hines has served as the head man of the association since January of 2012, and has overseen the growth of the association and the transition of executive directors over that tenure. He has helped spearhead the environmental stewardship committee working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on best management

practices for water stewardship, as well as serving on GCSAA's Governmental Relations Committee. Hines accomplished all this while overseeing the daily operations of Windsong Farms Golf Club.

But for Hines, the commitment to service just kind of makes sense.

Hines started in the golf industry at a very early age in Ligonier, Pennsylvania his home town. He started working at the golf shop at Champion Lakes Golf Course in his early teens, while learning the game he grew to love.

When he entered high school he started working maintenance at Laurel Valley Golf Club for Superintendent Mark Kuhns, CGCS. It was that relationship with Kuhns that would open many doors for Hines, and ultimately lead him to the life he leads to this day.

Hines enrolled at Penn State University in the fall of 1986 after graduating from Ligonier High School in Pennsylvania. With an eye on the business side of golf, Hines grew frustrated with college

and took a two-year break while continuing to work maintenance at Laurel Valley for Kuhns. It was there in 1989 that Hines got his first taste of preparing for a major tournament when Laurel Valley hosted the US Senior Open.



Hines and First Assistant Todd Kranz review a construction project taking place at Windsong Farm.

To say that Kuhns is a friend and mentor to Hines would be an understatement. The relationship started at a very early age.

“He was my scout leader,” Hines said.

Whatever leadership skills Kuhns helped instill in Hines paid off for both men as Kuhns was hired to care for the venerable Oakmont Country Club in 1991, and Hines was right there with him from day one serving as an assistant superintendent. Oakmont would host the 1992 US Women’s Open and the 1994 US Men’s open during that tenure.

“Mark Kuhns is more than just a mentor, he’s like a father figure. I wouldn’t be here today if it wasn’t for his support and love,” Hines said.

With a turf degree from Penn State in his pocket (1993 graduate) and a wealth of experience under his belt Hines made the ascension from assistant to Superintendent in 1996, taking over Riverview Golf Course in Elizabeth Pa. For Hines it was a bit of a culture shock, as Riverview was a daily fee public course with a single owner but he said he wouldn’t trade the experience for anything. He said he learned a ton about how to make things work on a limited budget and make do with



what he had to work with.

“I tip my hat to those guys,” Hines said. “The guys who pull off great conditioned golf courses with so little to work with, those are the real (quality) superintendents. Anybody can do it with an unlimited

In his home “away from home” at the comand center of Windsong Farm



A well protected family: Leighton, wife Kristin, Olivia and Scottie

budget.”

While toiling along at Riverview in the fall of 1999 the winds of change would blow Hines in completely different direction however, and once again it was Kuhns who was providing the air flow. Hines knew Kuhns was trying for the Director of Golf Courses

position at Baltusrol Country Club in New Jersey when he saw his old friend and mentor riding across the Riverview Golf Course. He knew Kuhns had landed the position.

“He came riding up the fairway, drove up to me and said I got 10 months until the US Amateur, I want you there with me,” Hines said, and at that point he became the Superintendent of the lower course at Baltusrol.

While Hines valued his time at Baltusrol, the work was hard, and the hours long. While he was not necessarily looking for a change in 2001, an event changed Hines, and everybody else, on September 11 of that year.

“I watched both towers fall with my own eyes,” he said. “I was all done here, it was time to go.”

Right about that time Hines had a couple irons in the fire for potential jobs and when he caught wind of a grow-in project in Independence, Minnesota he was keenly interested, not having done a grow in before. With a little leg work from future assistant and Minnesota native Jeff Girard and help from local golf legend Reed Mackenzie, Hines landed the Superintendent position at Windsong



Hines in Washington DC representing the Golf Industry with the GCSAA Government Affairs Committee

Farm Golf Club in 2002, a position he holds today.

“I just had a ball in the interview process, and it seemed like the perfect fit. Reed MacKenzie was very integral in getting me this job,” Hines said.

Minnesota ushered in a big change in Hines’ professional life. He saw the course grow in, grow up, and is still undergoing change to this day. But Minnesota also ushered in a change in his personal life as well.

Not too soon after grow-in Hines was set up on a blind date with Kristin Leighton, a very accomplished golfer originally from Austin, Minnesota.

“It was just about love at first sight,” he said. “She needed convincing but I got her over the ridge. It was the best thing that ever happened to me.”

The couple became parents four years ago with Leighton and again two years ago with Olivia. Kristin works with pre-school special education children at ISD 196 (Eagan, Apple Valley, Rosemount) and also keeps her hand in the golf business as both a teaching pro and staff pro at Mendakota Country Club.

With Scottie managing Windsong and Kristin busy with her two jobs raising young children would seem almost impossible except for the Hines’ super support system of Kristen’s mother Jo-Jo Leighton who lives with Scottie and Kristin, and is a great supporter of both them and the children.

Hines’ service to the MGCSA started with a simple invite to

serve on the education committee, and from there he became more and more involved. Over the past decade he has served on the awards committee, research committee and education committee. He helped form the MGCSA environmental award given annually to a nominated recipient. He also helped form and structure along with Paul Diegnau, CGCS and Jack MacKenzie, CGCS the aforementioned Environmental Stewardship Committee.

When asked what he was most proud of accomplishing over his tenure, Hines suggested that his biggest achievement was the structuring of the Board to a committee based entity. That, and the reaching out and engaging of associations like the PGA, MGA and government entities that will help create partnerships that will serve the MGCSA for years to come.

On the national level- he was very proud to be able to get the ear of our Minnesota policy makers and tell them the value of the golf course industry.

I'm (pretty) proud of getting our story out to our elected officials," Hines said. "We told them we can't afford to be over-watering, over



A respectable professional staff; Jon Dailing, Scottie Hines, CGCS, Todd Kranz and Justin Ellison.

fertilizing because that hurts our bottom line. It was great to be able to tell them that story and make them realize we are a pretty good size industry that helps the economy.”

Hines presidency came as almost an accident. He related that while he was serving on numerous committees as well as the Board, he wasn't really striving for a presidential nomination. He said it wasn't something that he really thought about or was goal of his, he just came in with the mind-set

of service and let's see. About four years ago he found himself one of the elder-statesman of the Board and was told: “You're up- you're the oldest guy,” which he accepted graciously.

“I got into this just more to give back,” he said. “If there's one thing I want them (his children) to understand is giving back. It was never a goal of mine (the presidency) but I'm glad I'm here. We've made some big decisions the last few years, and being a part of it has been very rewarding.”

Hines will ride off into the sunset of his service to the MGCSA as Ex-Officio for the next two years, but indicated he will be back sometime, and continue to serve in other capacities. For now, with a young family, it is time serve and lead, with them, as much as he can.



Sharing his passion for hunting with son Leighton.