

ANGIE CAMMAROTA MEMORIAL

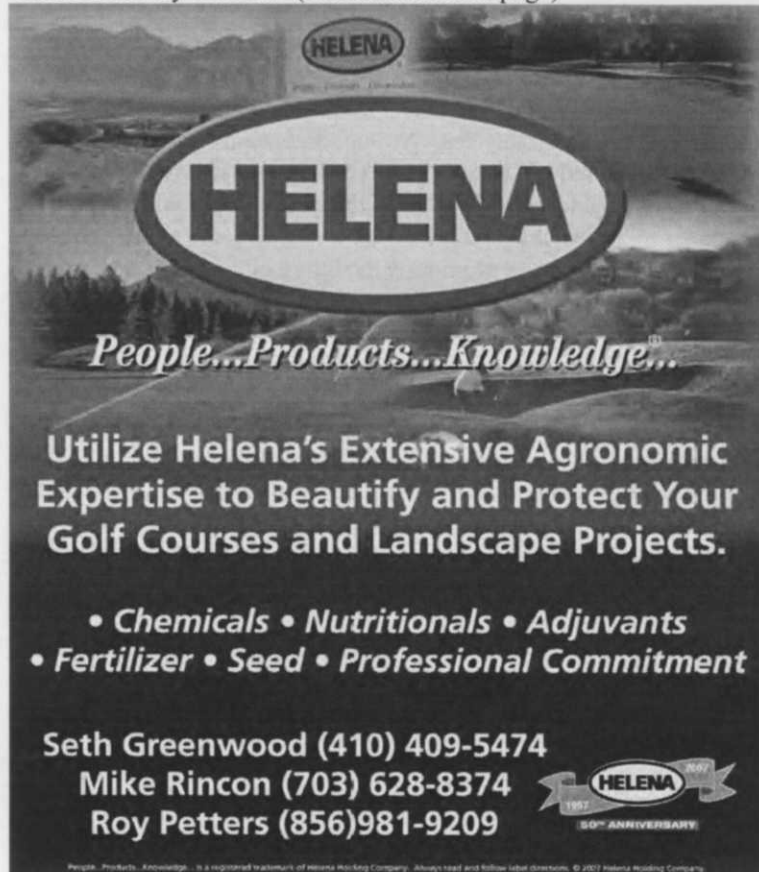
By Dave Cammarota

On October 8th some 95 supporters of the Maryland Turfgrass Council were treated to the beauty and pleasure of Golfing at the beautiful Sparrows Point Country Club, prepared by Superintendent, John Denholm and his staff, in an event we've all come to know as the Angie Cammarota Memorial Golf Tournament. This event is held in fond memory of a true turfgrass professional, in support of the University of Maryland Turfgrass Research projects at its facility in College Park, Maryland. It has been 12 years since Angie's passing in 1995, and many young Turfgrass Professionals, who've entered the industry since then, have not known much about Angie, or why he is so revered by many of his contemporaries. And so, for clarity, I am attempting here to bring his remembrance into recognition, by reviewing a little about his career.

Angelo Cammarota was born in South Philadelphia, in 1915; he was the fourth of six children. His father, Paolo, was an Italian immigrant, who found work at the Curtis Estate in West Philadelphia, and was there when Mr. Curtis, who was the founder of the Curtis Publishing Company (LOOK Magazine) decided to build a nine hole golf course, which he named Old York Country Club. (not the current Old York CC) The contractor, who built Old York, asked Paolo to join him in his next construction at Tavistock Country Club in Haddonfield, NJ, which Paolo accepted, and in 1931, he was named the Head Greenskeeper. During the Great Depression of 1930, and out of necessity, Angelo, as a young teenager, was compelled to quit high school, and went to work with his father & older brother as an employee at Tavistock. During the off-season, Angelo was given work in the Clubhouse as a Locker Room Attendant, and when he came of age, was trained as one of the Bar Staff. During his years at Tavistock, Angelo sought to finish his high school equivalency, and upon completion, eventually enrolled at New Jersey's Rutgers State University to pursue his education in Turfgrass Management. In 1946, Angie's father passed away, after serving 26 years as a Tavistock employee, and due to lack of seniority, Angie tried unsuccessfully to become his father's successor. From 1946 to 1950, he held two Head Greenskeeper positions; one at Cooper River CC on the Collingswood side of the river, and two years, he spent at Iron Rock GC (now Pennsauken GC) on the other side.

In 1950, Angelo opened "Cameo Landscape Service" out of Audubon, NJ, specializing in Turf, Landscape, & Tree Service. He began the small company servicing many of the members of Tavistock Country Club. Angie's fledgling company began with a pickup truck and two employees, and by 1956 his company had grown to 5 specialty trucks and 10 employees, and relocated to Magnolia, NJ. In 1958, a friend, Golf Course Superintendent, Russell Kerns Jr, compelled Angelo to return to golf course maintenance work by taking the Superintendent's position at Green Hill Yacht & Country Club in Salisbury, Maryland.

So, in 1958 Angelo returned to his golf course maintenance profession again, while still operating his Landscape Service out of Magnolia, NJ. Six seasons later found Angelo at Bonnie View CC (now defunct) And it was while serving there that Angie became a member of the Executive Committee of the MAAGCS. By that time, he had two sons and 3 daughters, and hired his sons as summer employees working on the golf course. It was during Angie's Bonnie View years that he blossomed as a consummate leader, climbing up the ladder of the Executive Committee of the MAAGCS, and by 1966, was serving his two-year term as their President. It was during the 1960's that members of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents and the Maryland Sod Producers banded together, and were beginning to talk about a coalition of their respective professions to bring about some political clout in Maryland, and about 4 years later, in the early 1970s, 26 Charter Members began the Maryland Turfgrass Council, fashioned after the Pennsylvania and Virginia Turfgrass Councils. Early on, before this coalition, some of those same individuals were also instrumental in promoting the beginnings of a Professional Turfgrass Training curriculum at the University of Maryland. With the help of Dr. James Miller, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Entomologist, Dr. George C. Lankford, and Dr. Elwyn Deel, the Institute of Applied Agriculture was born, subsequently, the first graduating class of eight commenced in May of 1967. (continued on next page)



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The annual Baltimore Turf Conference was, at first, held during the month of January in the 1960's at the Lord Baltimore Hotel, in downtown Baltimore, and became the annual meeting place for the then 3-day seminars, attended by, not only Maryland Turf Professionals, but Pennsylvania's, and Virginia's alike.

In 1969, Angie took a brief Superintendent's position back in New Jersey to manage the turf operations at Sonny Jim GC in Marlton, NJ, and in a little more than a year, he left Sonny Jim, and returned to Maryland, and briefly took a sales position with Cornell Chemical & Equipment Co. in Woodlawn Maryland, until a Superintendent's position opened at Indian Springs CC in Glenmont, Maryland, outside of Silver Spring. Some 20 months later found Angelo in brief employment at Westwood CC in Vienna, Va, then finally accepting a position at Columbia Association's Hobbitts Glen CC, & sister course, Allview GC, along Rt. 108 in Columbia, Maryland, where he finished out his career. Angie often joked that his father persevered at one Golf Club for 26 years, while he preferred to work for 26 different courses, "because after a few years, you're just a fixture, and are replaceable."

Angie was an individual who truly held that his vocation was also his avocation; he was a mentor and friend to many younger turf professionals; and referred to them as his Step Sons. I would be remiss if I didn't mention that just a few of those gentlemen are Bill Emerson, Mike Larsen, and Chip McDonald. He was also known by all the academians, and the movers & shakers from Massachusetts to South Carolina, and was a frequent speaker at many turf conferences up and down the east coast. He was known for his quick wit, and loved to tell jokes whenever he was in the company of his associates. At Superintendent's monthly meetings, you could tell at which table Angie was sitting; there'd be raucous laughter as he held court there. However, when it came down to serious business, he'd be a staunch, and vocal proponent for any measure promoting the future of the position of Golf Course Superintendents. In the last years of his life, due to the ravages of Diabetes and Glaucoma, Angie had lost his eyesight, and in his last public appearance, addressing his view of the future of Turfgrass Professionals, (and as only he could so adequately say), "I may have lost my eyesight, but I have not lost my vision." for the turfgrass professional. It is my fervent hope that this next generation of young turf professionals can and will enjoy the same fond memories of past generations of those who placed their blood, sweat, and tears on the pages of history in the development of our turfgrass industry and culture.

GCSAA News

MAAGCS student member, Richard Gillispie (University of Maryland) won a \$500.00 Merit Scholarship through the GCSAA. Congratulations, Richard.



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MAAGCS 2007/2008 SCHEDULE

December 5, Annual Meeting and Elections
Manor Country Club

January 31, 2008, Orlando Reception
Crowne Plaza Resort

March 20, 2008, Education Seminar
University of Maryland