

Venturi To Receive GCSAA's Old Tom Morris Award

Ken Venturi, CBS golf analyst and former PGA Tour professional, has been selected to receive the 1998 Old Tom Morris Award from the GCSAA.

The announcement was made in an August 15 news conference at the 1997 PGA Championship at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaronek, N.Y. The actual award presentation will take place in Anaheim, California at a gala banquet February 7 during the Association's 69th International Golf Course Conference and Show.

GCSAA's most prestigious honor, the Old Tom Morris Award is presented each year to an individual who, "through a continuing lifetime commitment to the game of golf, has helped to mold the welfare of the game in a manner and style exemplified by Old Tom Morris." Morris (1821-1908) was greenkeeper and golf professional at the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland; a four-time winner of the British Open (1861, '62, '64 and '67); and ranked as one of the top links designers of the nineteenth century.

"Ken exemplifies the spirit of Old Tom Morris because he has a passion for the game and all that it has to offer," said Paul S. McGinnis, CGCS, GCSAA president. "Quietly, unassumingly, behind the scenes, he's done a great deal to benefit the game of golf and those less fortunate. He has brought the game to people around the world and, in the process, always supported superintendents and recognized their management and environmental achievements."

Venturi grew up in the San Francisco Bay area and would have quit the game in his

youth if it were not for a motivational lecture from his father. After that incident, his career took off with several junior and amateur tournament wins. Venturi graduated from San Jose State University in 1953, but delayed his golf career to serve in the military. He burst onto the scene in 1956 as he led the Masters for three rounds as an amateur before losing to Jackie Burke.

Undaunted by the crushing loss at Augusta, Venturi turned pro in 1957 and won 14 PGA Tour events, the last one coming in 1967. Undoubtedly, the highlight of Venturi's career came in winning the 1964 U.S. Open Championship at Congressional Country Club in Washington, D.C., in the 100-degree heat and stifling humidity. (The following year, the Open was changed to a four-day, 18-holes-per-day event). That title, which came after a string of physical setbacks, earned Venturi PGA Player of the Year, *Sports Illustrated's* Sportsman of the Year and Comeback Athlete of the Year honors.

Among his other achievements are a selection to the 1965 Ryder Cup team and, induction into the Collegiate Hall of Fame (1978) and Smithsonian Institute (1979). He was presented the Golden Tee Award by the Metropolitan (N.Y.) Golf Writers in 1994.

Although carpal tunnel syndrome (undiagnosed at the time) forced Venturi to retire at 33, he has remained a fixture in the world of golf. For the past 29 years, Venturi has provided analysis for coverage of golf on the CBS Television Network. He began his commentary career as a co-host with Jack Whitaker for the CGS Golf Championship and CGS Golf Classic in 1968.

- Ken Venturi's PGA Tour Victories
- 1957 St. Paul Open
 - Miller Open
 - 1958 Thunderbird Invitational
 - Phoenix Open
 - Baton Rouge Open
 - Gleneagles-Chicago Open
 - 1959 Gleneagles-Chicago Open
 - Los Angeles Open
 - 1960 Bing Crosby Pro-Am
 - Milwaukee Open
 - 1964 U.S. Open
 - Insurance City Open
 - American Golf Classic
 - 1966 Lucky International

Quoting Previous Old Tom Morris Award Winners

Byron Nelson 1994 "I think the job the superintendents have done is the biggest improvement in golf today. The demands have caused it, yes, but also the education that the superintendents have now in agronomy and such (is critical). What I like is that golf course management has become so good universally."

Tom Watson 1991 "In this day and age, a golf course superintendent must be an educator, scientist, agronomist, economist and a good people manager. If you put all this together with a love for a piece of earth, then you've got a good golf course superintendent."

Robert Trent Jones, Sr. (1987) "To golf course superintendents around the world I owe a great debt, and every architect owes a great debt. We can only continue to provide these great golf facilities with well-ecudated professionals to maintain them."

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