

Annual Awards

The GCSANC Turfgrass Excellence Award is presented to an individual for their high level of achievement as they uphold quality standards in turfgrass maintenance. Award criteria takes into consideration: overall course condition, conservation and environmental factors, course activity and maintenance budget. This honor will be awarded in two categories.



Turfgrass Excellence Award, Public Category

George Young

*San Jose Municipal Golf Course
San Jose, CA*

George Young started in the turf care industry working 12 years for the Pebble Beach Company as a spray technician and project man at Spyglass Hill GC and Pebble Beach GL on the Monterey Peninsula. Next, he was off to Rancho Canada GC (Carmel, CA)

where he served seven years as an assistant golf course superintendent. To this day, he still remembers the two major floods he endured during his tenure at the 36-hole public facility located next to the Carmel River.

In 1999, Young accepted the golf course superintendent position at San Jose Municipal Golf Course (San Jose, CA), a South Bay facility owned by the City of San Jose and operated by Rawitser Golf. If you've never had the chance to visit a busy, Silicon Valley-based municipal course, you might want to spend an eye-opening day with Young, at facility that welcomes golfers 365 days a year.

Now, in his 13th year at this popular municipal course (a course, known by the locals, simply as "Muni"), Young knows that the tee sheet remains full and golfers are Number 1, which may require adjusting crew schedules to complete on-course projects. It never fails, no matter how busy the course might be, Young and his staff get the job done, and well, at that.

While many golf courses experienced some decline in business in recent years, San Jose Municipal GC remained solid in rounds, keeping Young and his crew of 12 in demand when caring for the 100-acre parcel which also includes a highly-frequented driving range and practice center.

This par-72, Robert Muir Graves-designed course consists of ryegrass and bermudagrass fairways with a bent-poa mix, and bentgrass greens with some poa. The course relies on both recycled water and well water recycled for fairways and rough, and well water for greens. Common practice at the facility is to minimize the use of chemicals whenever possible.

Young and his team have redone all 18 greens and recently he's been working on drainage projects. Next priority will be a tree moving project with the ultimate goal of elevating interest and increased shot strategy for the low to the mid-low indexed player.

Young enjoys his work as well as the crew he surrounds himself with on a daily basis. As for his management philosophy, Young believes you should use everyone to the "best of their strengths" and work with them on their weaker areas, too...but always make sure to recognize their talent and strengths.



Turfgrass Excellence Award, Private Category

Ken Williams, CGCS

*Stanford University Golf Course,
Stanford, CA*

When it came to selecting a finalist for Turfgrass Excellence in the Private Category, certified golf course superintendent Ken Williams quickly came to mind. Not only is he responsible for a well-maintained university golf course in the San Francisco Bay Area,

Williams is also responsible for overseeing the 30-acre Siebel Varsity Golf Training Complex which has been touted as the best in all of collegiate golf.

Prior to arriving at Stanford University GC in 1995, Williams worked at Rancho Bernardo Inn & CC (San Diego, CA) and also at La Quinta Hotel GC (La Quinta, CA).

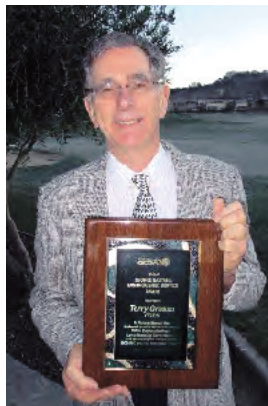
The Stanford University GC (originally designed by George Thomas with construction managed by William "Billy" Bell) continues to be in premier condition today, due to the diligent work of Williams and his crew. Ranked No. 6 on *Golfweek's* Best Campus Course list, the course is enjoyed by university students, faculty, members, and alum, and has hosted scores of notable tournaments over its 83-year history including: NCAA men's and women's championships, Pac-10 championships, U.S. Open Qualifiers, the USGA Junior Championship and the Western Amateur.

When you ask Williams about his maintenance philosophy he'll be the first to tell you he leans towards natural and sustainable. At Stanford they conduct very few preventive treatments for pests, and make a point to spot treat most weeds and diseases. Williams works faithfully to keep bent grass the primary turf on the greens, because it requires far less fertilizer and chemical inputs. According to Williams that work entails doing things "the old school way" (similar to a British greenkeeper's model) which means more sand, less fertilizer, lots of iron and no core aeration. Overdoing the cultural practices like verti-cutting aerating, ultra-low mowing and heavy feeding shift the balance away from the favored turf types. He also believes that maintenance practices dictate what type of turf will persist on the rest of the course, and since California's climate is so mild many types of grass grow but few will truly thrive. Williams tends to let nature and the maintenance practices dictate what type of turf grows where, and in what season.

A former GCSANC Course Superintendent of the Year honoree, Williams also shows his dedication to the game through his volunteerism. He has served on the GCSANC board of directors, hosted Nor Cal Chapter fundraising events and a highly successful Field Day, too. And, while he's a successful blogger today, the GCSANC will always be grateful to Williams for his years of dedicated work as the chapter's newsletter editor.

Annual Awards

The George Santana Distinguished Service Award is presented to a dedicated chapter member, for their long-standing commitment to the GCSANC and the turf care industry.



George Santana Distinguished Service Award

Terry Grasso, CGCS

Sequoyah Country Club,
Oakland, CA

At the formative age of 13, Terry Grasso started as a caddie at Claremont CC, and now, today, this distinguished honoree is a certified golf course superintendent at Sequoyah Country Club (Oakland, CA) where he is completing his 26th year as a GC-

SANC member.

Prior to Sequoyah CC Grasso was the golf course & grounds superintendent at Burlingame CC (Hillsborough, CA), an assistant golf course superintendent at the Olympic Club (San Francisco, CA), a greenskeeper at Claremont CC (Oakland, CA) and also an assistant golf professional there, too.

Grasso does a tremendous job in his role as golf course superintendent at Sequoyah, a private, East Bay club which is rich in history and spirit. In the late 30's and early 40's, Sequoyah served as venue host for the Oakland Open which attracted such stand-out players as Hogan, Nelson, Snead and Demaret.

Grasso has long-garnered the respect of the club's leadership team, who values his work and recognizes the importance of a well-maintained course. Grasso finds great satisfaction in training and inspiring his staff and continues to mentor them as well as other up-and-coming turf care professionals throughout the Nor Cal region. He is a trusted confidante to his colleagues and makes a point to get together with them as often as he can to "talk" turf.

This is a special year for Grasso and Sequoyah CC members as they celebrate the clubs' 100th anniversary. When the GCSANC was planning its 75th year anniversary celebration (a few years ago), it was Grasso who stepped up to the plate to serve as our event host. He still continues to lend a hand today whenever he can. In addition to supporting GCSANC programs like scholarship & turfgrass research, Grasso has hosted education workshops, California Alliance for Golf meetings and USGA Green Section meetings at his club.

Grasso and his club members are supporters of The First Tee of Oakland, the Oakland Turfgrass Education Initiative and the NCGA Foundation and have even hosted a 100-hole golf marathon benefiting charitable causes. Because Grasso and the members at Sequoyah genuinely care about the future of golf for kids, they have established a golf merit scholarship program which benefits local youth.

View All Annual Meeting Photos:

<http://www.gcsanc.com/events/photo-archive/2013-empire-ranch-golf-club/>



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Annual Awards

The Bert Graves Affiliate Merit Award is presented to an individual who has contributed in extraordinary ways to the association & its members.



Bert Graves Affiliate Merit Award

David "Dave" Wilber

Sierra Pacific Turf Services,
Nor Cal Region

The 2012 Bert Graves Affiliate Merit Award was bestowed upon Dave Wilber, principal and director of agronomy for Sierra Pacific Turf Services, a division of Sierra Pacific Turf Supply.

Wilber has been an agronomic consultant since 1992 and prior to that a

golf course superintendent in Northern California and Colorado. He started in the golf maintenance and construction business at the age of 15. He has an AAS degrees in Soil Science and Turfgrass Science from Northeastern Colorado College and attended the Turfgrass program at Colorado State University. He was awarded the William A. Albrecht Soil Science Fellowship in 1990 and is a member of the Brookside Society of Professional Consultants.

Wilber has advised on construction, renovation/restoration and turfgrass management issues at high-end facilities to sites with limited budgets, and in more than 20 countries and throughout the U.S. His client list includes the Bandon family of courses plus Kingsbarns, Southern Hills, San Francisco Golf Club and the Olympic Club, to name a few.

He integrates sustainable soil and plant nutrition into the practical turfgrass environment. Wilber also blogs and shares his passion for turf care as a contributor to various turf and golf-related publications. There is no end to Dave Wilber's passion for Turfgrass, thus he's been tagged with the nickname: "The Turfgrass Zealot".

Wilber has served on the GCSANC Board of Directors as an affiliate representative (for two separate terms) and on the Sierra Nevada Chapter board where he served two consecutive terms. His knowledge is invaluable and his contributions to the association and the turf care industry are greatly appreciated. Wilber, along with Sierra Pacific Turf Supply, continue to be loyal supporters of the Nor Cal Chapter through their sponsorship of education, turfgrass research, and scholarship programs.

The Golf Course Superintendent of the Year Award is presented to a GCSANC member who has made contributions for the betterment of the association, its members and the overall profession. This is the highest distinction bestowed upon a golf course superintendent.



Golf Course Superintendent of the Year

Rodney Muller

Empire Ranch Golf Club
Folsom, CA

The GCSANC is pleased to announce that Rodney Muller is the worthy recipient of the 2012 Golf Course Superintendent of the Year Award.

As golf course superintendent at Empire Ranch Golf Club (Folsom, CA) Muller keeps himself fully-engaged at

this public, links-like parkland course managed by Club Corp. Previous to Empire Ranch, Muller served as golf course superintendent at Tilden Park GC (Berkeley, CA) and earlier in his career held assistant superintendent positions at Monarch Bay GC (San Leandro, CA) and Topeka CC (Topeka, KS).

It was at Kansas State University that Muller earned a BS Degree in Agriculture with emphasis in Golf Course Management, which he added to his BA Degree in Management and Human Relations.

As a Class "A" golf course superintendent, Muller receives the Golf Course Superintendent of the Year Award for his ongoing contributions to the betterment of the association and its members, as well as the golf community. He has served on the GCSANC board of directors and in officer capacity as vice president, and in 2012, as president of the organization.

During his tenure as chapter president Muller was instrumental in improving programs and services for fellow golf course superintendents and affiliate members. His volunteerism efforts include serving on several committees spanning from Education and Institute to Newsletter & PR to Salary & Membership as well as Strategic Planning. At the national level he has participated in the Chapter Leader-Executive Symposium.

Muller is a supporter of the California Alliance for Golf (CAG), a statewide organization whose goal is to protect valuable resources for those in the business of golf and turf care industry. He's been an advocate for helping save Sharp Park Golf Course and supports charitable causes which include the ASPCA, The First Tee, and the Sam Singh Scholarship Fund.

Naumann's Nor Cal News

Justin Mandon has accepted the Superintendent position at Pasatiempo Golf Club in Santa Cruz. Justin was the Superintendent on the Lake Course at the Olympic Club in San Francisco prior to his moving...**Pat Finlen, CGCS**, who was the Director of Maintenance at the Olympic Club, is now the Director of Golf at the Olympic Club...The former Superintendent at Pasatiempo, **Paul Chojnacky**, is now the new Superintendent at Oakridge CC in Farmington, Utah.