

Distinguished Award

The Midwest GCSA certainly is proud of one of its members, namely **Ray Gerber** in receiving the Distinguished Service Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, which is the highest award that can be bestowed upon an individual.

It is our judgment that Ray has demonstrated a most exemplary example as a golf course superintendent over a lifetime, including a considerable number of achievements.

Ray Gerber was born in Wayzata, Minnesota at the turn of the century and will see his 75th birthday later this year. He got off to an early start in golf by driving a team of horses during the construction of the Woodhill C.C. in Minneapolis at the age of 16 years. Ray became fascinated with the artistry of Donald Ross and ended up working for Woodhill for the next nine years.

By 1925 Ray had become quite a specialist with various new pieces of equipment and was hired by the Toro Corporation to go to Pine Valley Golf Club in New Jersey to work with the club in the proper use and care of the newest power equipment. He stayed on at Pine Valley for the entire year in this capacity.

In 1926, Ray returned to the Midwest as a foreman during the construction and early maintenance at the new Medinah C.C. in Chicago (a 54 hole operation). He continued working at Medinah through 1933 after becoming the assistant superintendent.

As the depression years came on, Ray again turned to his fancy for equipment and became a traveling equipment serviceman. In this endeavor he operated as an independent specialist and toured around from club to club with a truck workshop, repairing, grinding and servicing mowers.

Then in 1936, Ray was offered the position of Superintendent at the Glen Oak C.C. in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, which he accepted. He continued in their employ until his retirement in 1971 after 35 years of a marvelous relationship with Glen Oak. His retirement is worthy of note in view of the fact that the club arranged for a full two day affair as a retirement party for Ray, including golf, lunches, dinners, etc. At the final dinner, Ray and his wife were presented with many beautiful gifts and mementos of his faithful service to the club. Ray continues his labor of love as a consultant to his successor as superintendent, Mr. Fred Opperman.

During Ray's past 58 years in golf maintenance, he has consistently been involved with professional association activities on a number of levels. His participation was highlighted by his serving as our 14th president of GCSAA in 1950. His dedication to GCSAA is apparent in view of the fact that he has missed only one annual conference since 1936 (38 years).

In similar fashion, on the local scene, Ray has served in all capacities of the Midwest GCSA and as its president on three different occasions. Now in semi-retirement, Ray continues to serve as the editor of the well-known chapter publication, "The Bull Sheet". As a matter of fact, Ray was one of the three originators of the magazine back in 1948 which now boasts a circulation of some 500.

Ray has been instrumental in the formation of two of the regional Turfgrass Foundations. The Midwest

Foundation at Purdue University and the Illinois Foundation at the U. of I.

Rising through the various offices of GCSAA brought Ray into contact with the entire membership through personal appearances at many local chapter meetings and through numerous written articles on turf published in England, Australia, Canada and the United States. Ray has estimated that he has appeared on approximately 100 conference programs at local, international and university levels. In fact, at age 75, we will be seeing Ray making another appearance at our 1975 conference in New Orleans.

Ray's on-the-job-accomplishments of note include a series of important contributions through the field testing of new materials and techniques. In particular, Urea fertilizers, Thiram Fungicide as a deterrent to snowmold, 2,4-D as an herbicide, and Chlordane as an insecticide, all in cooperation with Dr. Fred Grau, then the director of the USGA Green Section. Also, on-the-job contributions must include his effort in helping train five young student superintendents in the art of greenkeeping. Three of the five were sons of superintendents, including his own son Donald, now the superintendent of the Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton, Illinois.

Over the years, Ray unselfishly offered his experience in turf maintenance to his community as well. His contributions in this area include many laborious hours in establishing golf facilities at the various veterans hospitals at Downey, Hines, Vaughn, Danville and Waukesha locations. In addition, Ray had given of his services to establish the Village Links Golf Club in his home town of Glen Ellyn.

Ray has also served on a number of advisory committees over the years.

Village of Glen Ellyn;
Dutch Elm Control Committee;
Local high school turfgrass teaching program;
Local Community College turfgrass program;
GCSAA Long Range Planning Committee.

The Gerber family story has been one of love, happiness, discipline, humbleness, and hard work. Ray and his wife, Julia, will celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary in February, 1975. They have two married sons, Donald, Superintendent of the Chicago Golf Club, and Dr. Gerald, Professor of English Literature at Duke University.

Ray's most recent awards of recognition for his many contributions to the turfgrass field have been his life memberships to both the Glen Oak C.C. and the Village Links G.C. In 1971 Ray was awarded the Charles Bartlett award for public relations by the Midwest GCSA.

The membership of the Midwest GCSA unanimously feels that Ray Gerber's lifetime dedication and example to his profession merits consideration for recognition by GCSAA. Ray is a living inspiration to our entire membership and especially to our younger superintendents who are interested in setting goals of achievement for their lifetime careers in the grand experience of being a successful golf course superintendent.

Mike R. Bavier, President
Midwest GCSA

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