

Interview With Bruce Williams Vice President, GCSAA

by Editor

Bruce, congratulations on your election to Vice President. I know that this has been a long-time goal for you, and your father and mother must be proud.

I have a few questions that I would like to ask of our new V.P. I would like to thank you for giving me the time to do so.

Editor: As V.P., just what are your duties for this coming year? What committees do you chair and sit on?

B.W.: The position of Vice President of GCSAA will revolve around learning and training. I will be in close contact with the President in order to learn the role that I will play next year as well as acting as a mentor for the incoming Secretary/Treasurer to better train him to carry out his duties and responsibilities. I will chair the Planning Committee and the Chapter Relations Committee in 1995-1996.

Editor: What do you see as the greatest challenge for the GCSAA in 1995?

B.W.: At our Long Range Planning Meeting in 1994 we decided that the primary issues facing GCSAA are the environment, image, and chapter relations. We will work very hard to make significant improvements in these areas.

Editor: How do you feel the GCSAA will try to solve this challenge?

B.W.: We have developed a good dialogue with our chapters through the chapter delegate meetings held the last several years. We will continue to discuss the needs of the chapters and the inter-relationship of the chapters to the national organization. A "grass roots" public relations campaign will be launched in 1995. We hope that this will help in promoting the important role of the golf course superintendent and help to enhance their image in the workplace. GCSAA's television show, "Par For The Course" on ESPN, will be very positive for both image of the golf course superintendent and the positive effect of golf courses on the environment.

Editor: Okay, we looked at the challenge for '95 and a possible solution, but what do you feel is the biggest challenge/problem the GCSAA faces going into the 21st century (which is just around the corner, so to speak)?

B.W.: (Fred, I think I just answered that to some degree above because these issues will not be resolved in the short term). The National Golf Foundation recently completed a survey regarding the major concerns and issues in golf today. The results were that golf was perceived as a very exclusive game and that the environment was a concern for both golfers and non-golfers as it was affected by golf courses.

Editor: Care to comment on what you feel the GCSAA will have to do to answer this challenge/problem?

B.W.: In dealing with environmental issues and golf we will work diligently to provide the facts rather than emotional statements to substantiate the positive benefits of golf courses.

(continued page 28)

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(Bruce Williams Interview continued)

Editor: The past year or two has seen major changes in the makeup and structure of the GCSAA front office. Do you see any other changes we need to address in this area?

B.W.: I was involved in the selection process for the current management team at GCSAA. I am pleased to report that Steve Mona, Joe O'Brien, and Julian Arredondo have lived up to all of my expectations. We are still seeking a Director of Education and there will always be a few vacancies on staff for various reasons. It is our hope to continually improve services and programs to our members while keeping staff levels at their current number. Depending on the need for future programs the staffing could increase but the numbers have remained constant over the past 2 years.

Editor: Are we still the owners of the original building we built in Lawrence? Is there any hope of selling it in the near future, or are we better off keeping it to rent out and use the additional space as we grow?

B.W.: We still own the property at 1617 St. Andrews in Lawrence where the former headquarters of GCSAA is located. This building has been upgraded to meet the current standards for occupancy and is being leased. It is for sale and we have had several offers which either did not meet our acceptance or fell through for lack of financing, etc. We are committed to sell the building at a price comparable to its fair market value. Since the building is debt free we are operating in a positive cash flow with our tenant. This affords the opportunity to accept only a reasonable offer.

Editor: Bruce, you have always been in the forefront of advancing the Golf Course Superintendent and our profession. This all comes with sacrificing something else. Would you comment on how this has impacted your job at Bob O'Link?

B.W.: The sacrifices of holding office are many. To say the least, it has taken much of my time these past 4 years. I can easily tell you that it takes at least 20 hours per week to do your job properly for GCSAA. Some weeks seem like as much as 1/2 of my time is spent on GCSAA activities. Travel increases as the level of responsibility rises in the organization and this can cause a hardship on getting the business of the club accomplished. I have been extremely fortunate to have the support of my long time assistant, Rick Bowden, to whom I have delegated a significant amount of responsibility during my tenure on the GCSAA Board of Directors. While my days are much longer since being elected to the Board I feel that I have fulfilled all of my responsibilities to Bob O'Link Golf Club. I have grown personally and professionally with my involvement in GCSAA and I find this to be an indirect benefit to my club. I am a much better manager of my time as it has become a precious commodity. The club has been very supportive of my involvement with GCSAA, MAGCS, and the Chicagoland AGCS.

Editor: How has this affected your family life?

B.W.: The real losers in the battle for time are the members of my family. It takes a lot of evenings, long days, and weekends to conduct the business of GCSAA. Like most su-

(continued page 30)



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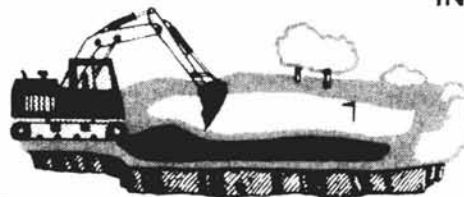
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(Bruce Williams Interview continued)

perintendents, I leave home before my family sees the light of dawn and now I seldom return hom before 6 p.m. each evening. It seeks like every week has some function that requires my presence locally or on the road. This might include committee meetings, Board meetings, executive committee meetings, Speaker's Bureau, etc. This certainly takes away a lot of family time that can never be replaced. I find myself scheduling family activities just like my other appointments to make sure that I don't miss out on the developmental years of my children. I owe a great deal of thanks to my wife for her understanding and taking on the appearance of sometimes being a single parent.

Editor: Since we have an International Golf Course Conference & Show, will we one day soon also have board members from other countries?

B.W.: I think it quite apparent that we will have more international members of GCSAA as time goes on. The globe is getting smaller and more courses are being built abroad than in the U.S. We have had Canadian members on our Board of Directors and one of the candidates in the recent election was Canadian. It is not unreasonable to foresee board members from outside the U.S. in the near future. I think the qualifications of the individuals are much more important than their residency.

A brief note is in order to all of the many people in the MAGCS who have made my service to GCSAA a reality. I thank you for your continued support. You have entrusted me with a significant responsibility and I do not take it lightly. I will do the best possible job to lead GCSAA in the right direction in the next several years ahead. Special thanks to our delegates, Roger Stewart, Bob Maibusch, Al Fierst, and Paul Voykin who have worked diligently on behalf of the MAGCS and myself in recent years. Without your support and the good works of many others I would not be representing the membership of GCSAA. I also hope that the MAGCS will continue to support Tommy Witt in the same fashion as he is destined to be a fine leader of GCSAA.



GCSAA/MAGCS Golf in California

The MAGCS players did pretty good in the GCSAA Golf Tournament. The Chapter Team Net went to: Alan Fierst, Robert Maibusch, John Stevenson, and Roger Stewart. Roger Stewart then won the 6th flight in gross. Senior I Net was won by Mike Bavier. Ken Goodman won the net division in the Senior II.

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