

Keith Fuchs



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-N- Gleneagles Country Club

And finally, it's back to the south suburbs...home of the Chicago White Sox and Gleneagles Country Club. Gleneagles and Keith Fuchs will host the October meeting.

Keith deeply loves everything about his career and profession. The ear-to-ear grin is only an outward expression of what his heart is saying.

I spent a long afternoon (but it certainly seemed brief) listening to Keith Fuchs. It was a lesson in the history of golf course management. The man and his family, in the most sincere manner, exemplify what is good and wonderful about the golf course superintendent profession:

- Commitment—Keith has worked for the same owners and country club, Gleneagles, for 43 years.
- Effort—Whatever it takes to maintain the course, build a clubhouse, design and develop a nine-hole course, fix a lawnmower and be on call when needed.
- History—Keith's father, Walter Fuchs, was a superintendent at Gleneagles 17 years prior to Keith beginning his run. His uncle was in the turf business, as are Keith's two boys.
- Family—A glow seems to illuminate Keith's face when he talks about his wife of 34 years, Linda, and their three upstanding young adults, Keith, Jr., Kevin and Keely, and three beautiful grandchildren.
- Respect—Keith truly respects and appreciates the McNulty family, owner of Gleneagles, and openly acknowledges the support and

(continued on page 21)

importance of his peers, associates, coworkers and golfers.

- **Admiration**—What Keith gives in respect, he receives in admiration from everyone, owners down to the golfers. Everyone knows and likes Keith Fuchs.
- **Sincerity**—Keith deeply loves everything about his career and profession. The ear-to-ear grin is only an outward expression of what his heart is saying.

Working at Gleneagles is indeed a labor of love.

There is something special about an old course. Do I call it strength, or character, or beauty, or history? The newer courses are nice with their state-of-the-art design and layout, professional appearance, fancy clubhouses and extra amenities. But the newer courses lack what only time and longevity will provide, and that's "character."

Gleneagles is loaded with character. Designed and built in 1924 by Blair McDonald, the course was originally called Twin Eagle. Twin Eagle opened with 18 holes and shortly thereafter, an additional 18 holes was under construction, adjacent to the original 18.

In 1951, the McNulty family purchased the golf course. Also, this was the beginning of the Fuchs tenure. The McNulty family hired Walter Fuchs, father of Keith Fuchs.

Walter had a son, Keith, who loved being on the golf course. At an early age—and I mean early—Keith was known to be crawling on the greens. From there, Keith began caddying, watering greens at night and even shining the shoes of professional golf greats such as Snead, Nicklaus, Venturi,

etc. during the Chicago Open in 1958 and 1959. Walter continued to teach Keith about golf course care, turf and maintenance. I guess you could say Keith's future career was inevitable.

After earning his degree from the University of Massachusetts in turf management, Keith began working for his dad at Gleneagles Country Club.

Keith gave me a quick tour of the two 18-hole layouts. A few things were quite obvious on both the Red (Lakes) Course and the White (Woodlands) Course. The trees are old and tall (Keith noted that most of these were the original 5,000 planted by his father), the fairways are tight and the greens are small. "It may look easy, but it's a real challenge," said Keith.

As with every course, the projects never end. It's just a matter of when the budget allows funding for completion. Some of the recent ongoing projects at Gleneagles are: rebuilding greens; remodeling of tees; sandtrap renovation; bidding cart paths; and digging a new lake on the Red Course's hole #17. Some major past projects included converting the fairway turf from bluegrass to bent and installation of the irrigation system.

I asked Keith what he felt to be his biggest challenge at Gleneagles. He looked at me and thought about it for awhile. Out came an interesting response: "Keep both the courses in the best shape possible and use my experience to ensure that 10- and 20-handicap golfers and 40- and 60-year-old golfers feel good about their experience at Gleneagles." Keith is always the one to respect and care about his golfers.

Keith truly has found his career and tenure at Gleneagles to

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be most rewarding, while still allowing him the time to enjoy his hobbies of golf (6 handicap), fishing, bowling and all sports; time to travel in the off-season; extra time to spend with his wife, children and grandchildren; and the opportunity to participate in the local high school, church council and Army Reserves.

Keith is a member in good standing of the MAGCS, the Chicagoland GCSA and GCSAA.

For some of us it's a trek to the south suburbs, but I would strongly recommend participating in the October meeting. Keith will be looking forward to seeing you. 