

The Illinois PGA's Golf Hall of Fame Inducts Ray Gerber



Don Gerber, longtime superintendent at Chicago Golf Club, accepts the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame plaque on his late father Ray's behalf. Don's remarks were heartfelt and moving.


Until October 12, 2001, the Illinois PGA's Golf Hall of Fame had inducted only one superintendent: Bob Williams, in 1990. Now, after an 11-year drought for the greenkeeping profession, Ray Gerber has joined an illustrious group that includes the other three Class of 2001 inductees: longtime Medinah pro Tommy Armour, celebrated amateur golfer Bill Shean and Tour pro D.A. Weibring.

During this, the 75th-anniversary year of the MAGCS, Ray Gerber has received plenty of ink in *On Course*, which he edited for 11 years (1972-83) during its *Bull Sheet* incarnation. Ray deserves every column inch we've devoted to his remarkable achievements, and then some. A three-time past president of the MAGCS and past president of GCSAA in 1950, Ray held the post of superintendent at Glen Oak Country Club for 34 years (1936-70). Always committed to education and ever the innovator, Ray received many distinctions during his lifetime, including the Charles Bartlett

Award for Public Relations in 1971, the Distinguished Service Award from GCSAA in 1975, and the Herb Graffis Special Recognition Award in 1981.

Dan Roan, sportscaster for WGN-TV, acted as master of ceremonies for the festive evening, which featured outstanding hospitality by the Glen Club and a moving video presentation highlighting the life and times of each inductee. Ray's son, Don Gerber, accepted the honor on his late father's behalf. At the Gerber table, in addition to Don, were Don's wife, Lynn; two of Ray's

granddaughters; and Bob Williams. In tribute to Ray, the Midwest also sent a delegation, including Brian Bossert, Luke Strojny, Kevin DeRoo, Fred Behnke, Mike Bavier, Carl Hopphan, Pete Leuzinger, Al Fierst, Jeff Leuzinger and Cathy Ralston.

Ray's splendid career and devotion to profession and family notwithstanding, the one comment I hear about him time and again is how much he epitomized a true gentleman. In this, perhaps, is the ultimate tribute. 

The Evolution of the Golf Course Superintendent (continued from page 25)

1999. In terms of golfer participation, an all-time number of rounds played (564.1 million) and the second-highest number of golfers (26.44 million) were realized in 1999.

Most observers are cautiously optimistic that the growth of golfers will gain momentum as the "Baby Boomer" generation begins to age. There are approximately 78 million Baby Boomers, and this group was responsible for

the biggest growth in the game when it reached 20-30 years of age. Research indicates that golfers spend more and play more as they age. Thus, the Boomers should fuel growth. The recent success of younger players and minorities on the professional tours will likely spur participation as well.

For the superintendent profession, the expansion in golf courses and other golf facilities

such as driving ranges, pitch and putts, etc., plus a probable increase in golfer demand is likely to result in good career opportunities for some time to come.

Information gathered from GCSAA archives and Golf Course Management Magazine.

