



Changing of the Guard

It is with a somber heart that I write this month's president's message. For on Thursday morning, September 4, 2003, the MAGCS executive secretary, George F. Minnis III, lost his battle with cancer.

George's wife, Karen, asks that we not be saddened by his death, rather rejoice in his life. George touched many lives and had a positive impact on all who came in contact with him. His accomplishments were many, yet he concedes his three greatest achievements were his daughter, Heather, and his two sons, Chris and Robert.



George F. Minnis III
1942 – 2003

*George will always
be remembered
and honored for
what he brought
to MAGCS.*

Personally, I feel the loss of a friend. Professionally, the MAGCS—his adopted family—will always be indebted to George for all that he has done for our Association. He brought us into the computer age and was the organizer behind the organization. Karen tells me that even in the midst of his own perilous fight, he was still barking out orders concerning the next MAGCS mailing. In his waning months, George actually thanked us for letting him stay involved with the Midwest. And I quote, "I do not know what I would do without MAGCS." As he was saying this, selfishly the only thought that crossed my mind was, what will MAGCS do without him?

Earlier this year, it was George who came to us and asked that we search for his replacement. The cancer that he had battled for years had returned, this time without respite. Ironically, just hours prior to George's passing, the executive boards of the MAGCS and Illinois Turfgrass Foundation (ITF) were ironing out a proposal to fill the new position of executive director for MAGCS/ITF. After a nationwide search through the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), the executive boards of both organizations unanimously chose a candidate from our own back yard. Luke Cella, CGCS, has agreed to fill this new position and take our associations into the future.

From the inception of our search, through the review of resumés and during the interview process, it became clear that Luke was the best individual and exceeded the criteria both associations were hoping to meet. Luke has an educational background that includes a degree in golf course management from Kishwaukee College, a B.A. in liberal arts and sciences from the University of Illinois and an M.S. in natural resources and environmental sciences, also from the University of Illinois. As impressive as his educational background is, it was his vision of possibilities for both associations that grabbed the attention of the selection committee. He anxiously wants to bring the MAGCS to the status of the leading GCSAA chapter; he feels that this is as it should be. For the ITF, raising additional money for turfgrass research is always the utmost concern, and Luke is committed to that as well.

With respect to the MAGCS, there is no doubt that Luke can handle the day-to-day operations. From the time George informed us of his failing health, Luke stepped up and volunteered his time to help George and learn the oper-

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ations and inner workings of our Association. Luke has acclimated in remarkably smooth fashion. The transition to a physical presence at the Midwest Golf House in Lemont has been a goal of ours for years. Along with filling this position of executive director, with Luke taking the helm we will be accomplishing that goal as well. Positive public exposure is the key to the success of our associations. Working closely with allied turf and golf associations all under one roof will only aid us in this endeavor. Having an organized professional who knows our profession intimately leading the way only makes sense.

As far as Luke assuming this new role, we on the MAGCS Board of Directors are as excited as can be to retain an individual with the wide range of talents he possesses. We certainly wish him well; the challenges that lie ahead are many, but ones that he assuredly will conquer. For George, his pain is over now, and his amazing legacy remains. He will always be remembered and honored for what he brought to MAGCS. Thanks for everything, George!



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