

Dave Meyer 1942-2004



Back row, left to right: oldest son Bryan Meyer, granddaughter Kayla Meyer, daughter Kara Meyer, son Austin Meyer, son-in-law Mike Espe.

Middle row, L to R: daughter-in-law Sara Meyer, Dave Meyer, wife Penny, daughter Heather Espe.

Front row, L to R: grandsons Davis and Rhet Espe.

The first time I met Dave Meyer was during an interview for the superintendent's position at Hughes Creek Golf Club. Dave walks into the restaurant of the clubhouse accompanied by the now-former golf pro, Scott Pless, does the introductions and immediately turns to Scott and says, "Look at this guy, he's not dressed to work on a golf course."

He then turns back to me and says, "I didn't know I was looking to fill an office position today." He didn't just break the ice, he crushed it. Needless to say, I walked out of the interview like a dog that had been scolded for peeing on the carpet. To my surprise, he wound up calling me at my then-current place of employment on my boss' office line and offered me the job; that's a story for another time.

I began my first day on the job in August of 1995, only to find out Hughes Creek would be hosting "some superintendents' meeting." That day arrived and Dave was quick to introduce me to as many people as possible as his new superintendent. He pegged me with the phrase "country club brat" and said that he was going to break me of all my private-club habits. I kept telling him that he was from the old school and I was from the new school, and that my practices were not derived solely from the country club. It was a learning experience for both of us, and we were soon drawn to the same page.

Dave considered all of his employees at Hughes Creek "family" and he wanted all of us to be a part of his: wife Penny and kids Brian, Heather, Austin and Kara. We were invited to attend family occasions such as barbecues, birthdays and graduations. I never had a boss do this before and it meant a lot to me to be considered "one of his own." If you screwed up, he would let you know it, and when you did good, you were graciously rewarded. When he yelled at you, you could only laugh, knowing that he was a big teddy bear inside.

As years went on, it was obvious that he was loved by many. No matter where you went with him, he knew someone. I learned a lot from Dave over the six-and-a-half years I worked for him and even gained the nickname "Junior," which was given by Gene Thompson, another former employee of Dave's.

The two toughest days I had with Dave Meyer are the days I will never forget. The first one was the day I gave him my resignation. It was like dropping a bomb on your dad and I didn't know who felt worse, me or him. The second-toughest day was when his son Austin called to inform me that Dave had passed away and I needed to accept the fact that he would not be there for my wedding day. Dave, you are "one of my own" and I thank you for giving this then-26-year-old "country club brat" the opportunity to be a superintendent. Your friendship will

be cherished and long-remembered. May you rest in peace, big guy, and I will see you again someday.

Sincerely,

David A. Braasch, Glen Erin Golf Club

I first met Dave about three years ago, almost to the day, when I interviewed with him for the superintendent job to replace Junior. When I accepted his offer, I remember the first thing he did was get on the phone and help find me a place to live. I'm not sure why I remember that series of events so vividly, but I think at the time it struck me that he truly wanted to help. There was nothing to indicate he was in any way showing off his connections or patronizing me, he simply wanted to help. And that experience foreshadowed the next three years of our relationship.

It wasn't long after that I realized I had become part of his, for lack of a better word, "circle." Because if you gained his respect, and he liked you, he treated you like a son. He was more than just a boss, more than just the president of Meyer Family Golf, Inc. He was a patriarch, a godfather, so to speak. He wanted to know what everyone in his circle, including me, was up to. He wasn't nosy, or prying; he wanted to know because he cared. He truly cared. So when I would hear him pull up to the shop door every morning at 11:30 and honk his horn to let me know he was there, my first reaction was to roll my eyes and think, there's Dave, right on schedule. But I soon learned he wasn't concerned about what I was doing at work. He knew I had the golf course under control. The reason he stopped by every morning was simply to talk. At that point it was no longer an employer-employee relationship. It was more than that. But at the same time, it was less than that, too. It was simply two friends talking. Sure we talked a lot of shop, but we also talked about friends. We talked about family. We talked sports, and weather, and gossip and all those other things that friends talk about. I'll remember those 11:30 meetings forever.

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Dave Meyer was a firm believer in respect. He believed in pecking orders. He believed that once respect had been earned, it entitled you to certain perks and leniencies. He was the true epitome of "old school." I remember a story a few years ago in which a new seasonal clubhouse employee arrived to work one day and parked curbside, right in front of the clubhouse under the flagpole. Now, anyone associated with Hughes Creek, employees and patrons alike, knew that the GM parked there. Under the flagpole was "Scott's spot." So Dave Meyer, in old-school fashion, explained to this naïve employee that he had parked in Scott's place. The employee, not taking Dave seriously enough, said, "Well, the early bird gets the worm." To which Dave immediately retorted, "Not here it doesn't."

Sincerely,

Darin Ayres, Hughes Creek Golf Club

I remember meeting Dave Meyer for the first time like it was yesterday. Carsons had bought Indian Lakes the previous fall and in the spring moved their superintendent from Nordic over to Indian, and he was looking for crew members. My girlfriend's father, Dick Jung, had also moved over as the head of building maintenance, and while Dick and Dave were having lunch together, Dave mentioned the opening to him. The job sounded good to me. Being outside all of the time, fresh-cut grass, hell I liked to golf, how bad could it be, right? The most important thing was the job paid \$3.25 an hour and I was only making \$2.85. I was sold, so off I went to the interview.

I remember Dick dropping me off at this very decrepit-looking barn that appeared to be rat-infested, and I thought, "What have I gotten myself into?" I walked inside to meet a larger-than-life Dave Meyer. The first thing he said was, "It's Meyer, not Meyers."

I wasn't too sure about the golf course business, but I knew how to work on engines and repair things, so Dave said I would do and that I could start on Monday. I remember him telling me he would teach me whatever I needed to know.

I would go on to work with Dave for the next 15 years, and I learned a lot from him. Sure, most of it was golf course-related, and he was a wealth of information about running a golf course, but it was so much more than that. Dave was a big guy, and I don't just mean in size, but in personality. When I would go places with him I felt like I was with the mayor of the town. It felt like he knew everyone, and would have to greet them all, and inquire about them, and their families. The Dave Meyer that I knew was a caring and sensitive individual who was always willing to help out anyone who needed help, and who truly cared about the people he worked with. He was a good husband and father who will be missed. I feel I am a better person for having known him, and am glad to have been able to call him my friend.

Sincerely,

Gene Thompson, retired



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