

Todd Schmitz -N-



Todd and wife Tina with their son, Aiden, and Todd's daughter, Tiffany.



Those of you with children have almost certainly heard them ask you, “Why did you do that?” Sometimes what seems clear or second-nature to us can be just the opposite for children. Often we do things just because it feels right—a “something- in-my-bones-tells-me-so” kind of thing, with no real explanation at all. Children don’t have that sense or feeling. It has to develop over time. As children, we learn by emulating what we see and hear, mostly our parents. Todd Schmitz, our host superintendent when the Midwest Association of GCS visits Phillips Park Golf Course on the 13th of this month, is a case in point.

When Todd and his brothers were young, their father, Ray, would take his sons to work with him at Green Garden Country Club on weekends and evenings.

Working on golf courses has been in Todd’s bones for a very long time. “It just feels right,” says Todd. Todd comes from a family whose name is synonymous with golf. Todd is the eldest son of Jan and Ray Schmitz. Ray is a longstanding MAGCS member who served our Association as president in 1992. Ray has been a golf course superintendent since 1967. He retired briefly from Flossmoor Country Club in 2002, only to return to our profession at Frankfort Square Links in Frankfort Square, IL, in March of this year. The “Schmitz superintendent boys” don’t stop with Ray and Todd. Mark Schmitz, Todd’s youngest brother, is the golf course superintendent at The Meadows Golf Club in Blue Island, IL. That makes three supers in one family: one father, two sons. That doesn’t happen often. Oh yeah, Todd’s brother Andy is an electrical engineer who lives in Aurora. He probably plays more “enjoyable” golf than all the other Schmitzes combined. Maybe he has the time, too.

When Todd and his brothers were young, their father would take his sons to work with him at Green Garden Country Club on weekends and evenings. Ray was the superintendent there, and Todd recalls first “helping” his dad cut cups and move tee markers when he was six years old. “I felt that I was really helping Dad out when we went to work with him. We enjoyed riding around on the course, setting sprinklers, moving hoses, checking on things. It was a riot,” Todd remembers. In actuality, Todd and his brothers, Mark and Andy, would just be horsing around, roughhousing, fighting with each other as one would expect three boys to do while their dad tended to things. “It was so much fun,” Todd recalls.

Todd is a 1987 graduate of Joliet Junior College, with an associate’s degree in business. In 1997, Todd completed the two-year turfgrass management certificate program at Rutgers University. He has served as an assistant golf course superintendent at Springbrook Golf Club, Naperbrook Golf Club, Prairie Landing Golf Club and Aurora Country Club before earning the

(continued on page 18)

opportunity to become the golf course superintendent within the Aurora Park District, at Fox Valley Golf Club in February 2002. In September of that year, Todd was reassigned as superintendent of Phillips Park G.C.

The origins of Phillips Park Golf Course trace back to 1920 when nine holes were first constructed on the hilly tract of land. In 1927, a “flat nine” was added to the original “hilly nine” to become an 18-hole layout. The original 60 acres for the park

where the golf course is situated were donated to the city by the estate of Travis Phillips in 1899. Phillips had served as mayor and as an alderman in Aurora, and was also a downtown businessman of wealth and influence. Before deeding of the land, the area was known as “Sharp Shooters Park” because it offered a beer-drinking establishment, a gun-shooting range and vineyard. Try getting that business plan approved before any city planning committee nowadays!

The first of two renovations of

Phillips Park G.C. occurred in 1938 as part of the civil Works Project Administration (WPA). The WPA was funded by the U.S. government to ease the effects of area unemployment during the Great Depression. The cost of the 1938 renovation, which included regrading all greens, enlarging many tees and “rearranging traps to divide the fairways, and make playing at the park a little safer,” was \$44,000. The course remained intact until the 1999 renovation.

The second renovation started



Phillips Park underwent a Greg Martin-crafted redesign in 1996. Here, hole no. 10.



The renovation resulted in a championship-caliber course playing 6,200 yards from the tips. Here, hole no. 5.

with the Aurora City Council's approval of a \$1.1-million land acquisition for further golf course expansion in 1996. The redesigned course was crafted by a hometown boy, Greg Martin, of Martin Golf Designs, Inc., and renovation work began in 1999. The new Phillips Park G.C. reopened on Saturday, July 14, 2001. The redesigned 18-hole course now encompasses "USGA" greens, a computerized irrigation system, larger greens, better overall drainage systems, strategically placed bunkers and water hazards, cart paths, a driving range and new clubhouse, as well as a three-hole Junior Course, resulting in a quality, championship-caliber golf course. With three sets of tees, the golf course ranges from 4,760 yards to 6,200 yards, providing a wide range of challenge for varying abilities.

Todd lives in Aurora with his wife of 13 years, Tina. They have a four-year-old son, Aiden. Tiffany is Todd's oldest child. She is 18 years old and lives in Plano, TX. She is graduating from high school this month. In his spare time, Todd enjoys shooting pool, playing darts,

golf and listening to music. Todd was elected to the MAGCS Board of Directors in November 2004, and currently chairs the Advocacy and Compliance Committee.

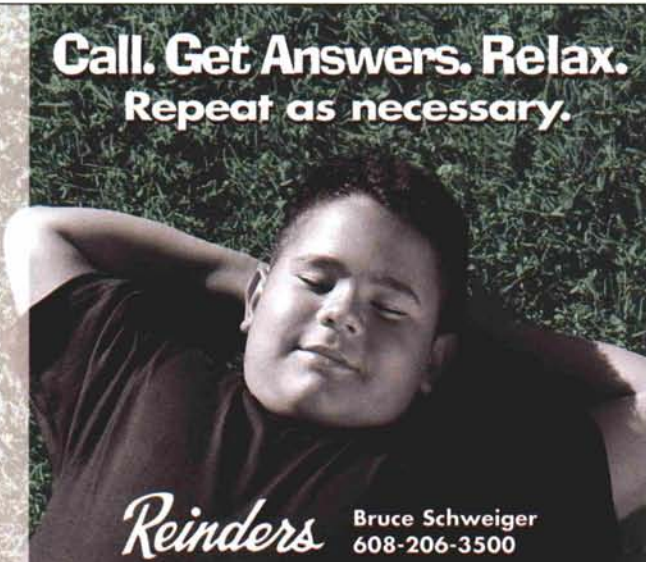
As was the case in Todd's childhood, Todd now takes his son, Aiden, to "his" golf course to "help" pick the range and play golf. "I loved taking Tiffany, and now Aiden, to

the golf course. It just feels so good, so right. It is a sheer joy," Todd explains. Doesn't that sound familiar? I think we may have a budding third-generation Schmitz superintendent in the making. Just the way it happened to Todd. In his bones, indeed.



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