



Brad Anderson, CGCS at Midlane Country Club.

Brad Anderson, CGCS, Earns Inaugural President's Award for Meritorious Service

Last year, the MAGCS Board of Directors agreed that it was appropriate and necessary to recognize the exceptional contribution of volunteers to the advancement of our Association, so I was directed to inaugurate the President's Award for Meritorious Service. I had two conditions to meet: the award could not go to anyone who held office or received compensation from the MAGCS for services rendered, and the voluntary service had to be significant enough to warrant special attention.

I took this assignment very seriously; after all, the MAGCS thrives (or declines) with volunteerism. The open sharing of matters pertaining to the care and feeding of golf courses and the immense work it takes to provide the quality of service our members have come to expect simply cannot be accomplished without the contributions of the many who serve on committees or special projects.

So I pondered . . . for about two minutes—yeah, I didn't even have to go past the first page of the MAGCS directory.

It simply had to be Brad Anderson, CGCS, of Midlane Country Club.

"Love is not only something you feel. It's something you do."

David Wilkerson
Clergyman

Many remarkable people come from remarkable families, and Brad is no exception. He and his best friend, his wife, Kim, have been married for 23 years. Kim is the daughter of dairy farmers, so she is understanding and supportive of Brad's work schedule. They have seven children, ranging in age from 21 to five (that in itself is worthy of an award). The kids—Chelsey, Sean, Kristin, Erick, Peter, Scott and Luke—are home-schooled by Kim, and Brad proudly points out that the eldest just received a scholarship to Trinity College. (Sounds like Kim should've gotten the award, doesn't it?) There is a little gap between the first four and the last three, and Brad recalls needing to shop for a crib and diaper-changing table at age 40 because they gave their old ones away—parenthood *deja vu*.

Brad has been the superintendent at Midlane for 15 years. He teaches turfgrass science at the College of Lake County, and in a couple of weeks he is heading down to the New Orleans area with a group from his church and a bunch of chainsaws to help clean up a particularly devastated area. Excuse me for a while . . . I need a nap.

"You don't understand anything until you learn it more than one way."

Marvin Minsky
Scientist and Educator

Many golf course superintendents consider peer testimonials their best source of information. The unvarnished opinion of someone who has "been there and done that" can be extraordinarily valuable when one is faced with an unknown. In essence, this is the cornerstone of our Association. Armed with an MAGCS directory and a telephone, a virtual encyclopedia of golf course maintenance is out there—if you know who to call.

In the early days of Brad's career, he caught on quickly that he could get smarter faster by drawing on the experiences of his fellows. Brad's main resource at the time was *Verdure*, the newsletter of the Chicagoland Association of Golf Course Superintendents. In particular, Kenny Quant while at Glencoe G.C. was the editor who instituted a feature called "News Around Town," snippets of information about projects, new products and inventions that Kenny gleaned from the membership and published. As his collection of *Verdure* grew, so did Brad's list of who to call when . . .

Now, it's one thing to devote a couple of hours penning an article for *On Course*, it's quite another to spend a couple of minutes talking to someone about something you accomplished. Brad felt that there was a motherlode of valuable insight among the members of MAGCS that could be unearthed if only there was a way to make it more painless to share. Brad approached the MAGCS Board with the idea of assembling a corps of "stringers" to solicit the membership for brief, newsworthy items pertaining to golf course management. The idea was shipped off to the Editorial Committee who embraced it (and Brad), and "Midwest Breezes" was reborn (the title of the feature was borrowed from Fred Opperman's monthly editor's column in the old *Bull Sheet*).

"We can only pay our debt to the past by putting the future in debt to ourselves."

John Buchan (1875-1940)
Statesman and Writer

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Seventy-five years is a long time. In 2001, the MAGCS celebrated its 75th birthday. There was much ado about history and pioneers. *On Course* ran a fabulous series highlighting each decade of our existence. It became fashionable to be in touch with the past, and impetus was generated for the completion of a project that had begun several years earlier: the MAGCS Family Tree.

Brad enjoys talking (as those who have spoken with him know), and his curiosity for things is a beast best fed by things ancient and hallowed. Conversations with ancient and hallowed superintendents like Paul Voykin, Bob Williams and Dudley Smith led Brad to the conclusion that completing the MAGCS Family Tree was a job that needed doing. Once again, with the Board's blessing, Brad assembled a team that included George Minnis (MAGCS executive secretary), Al Fierst, Gary Hearn and Luke Cella (who did yeoman's work assembling the data into its final format). Brad pointed out that the real work was done by the MAGCS membership, who researched their clubs' archives and responded with the information that was fed into the database. You can find the finished product in your directory. Bob Williams was the inspiration, but Brad was the straw that stirred the drink of the MAGCS Family Tree. Much valuable history that may have been lost has been preserved.

Interestingly, Brad relates that he had occasion to use information from the Family Tree to respond to the question: What is the shelf life of a golf course superintendent? Brad was able to make a case for the argument that golf courses that enjoy prestigious reputations, in many cases, employ fewer superintendents for longer terms. You can draw your own conclusions; the point is that the data is now there to be examined.

"The first law of ecology is that everything is related to everything else."

Barry Commoner
Biologist and Educator

There's your first recipient of the President's Award for Meritorious Service, Brad Anderson at this time last year. I hope you agree it was well-deserved.



The Anderson family (L to R): Erick, 15; Peter, 12; Chelsey, 21; Sean, 19; Brad and Kim; Luke, 6; Scott, 10; and Kristin, 17.

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