

## TRIBUTE

Ed Fischer, CGCS Old Elm Club

Jim Burdett Retired



Receiving the GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award in 2003.

# Dudley H. Smith 1930-2005

- Head Golf Course Superintendent, Silver Lake Country Club, 1958-2001
- Past President, MAGCS
- Past President, Illinois Turfgrass Foundation
- Founder, Charles Bartlett Award
- Recipient, GCSAA Distinguished Service Award

Dudley H. Smith passed away on Sunday, August 28, 2005. There will never be another Dudley. When he attended a Midwest meeting, everyone knew who he was, though he knew only a few of the new members by name. It didn't matter what the function may have been—local, regional or national—everyone in the room recognized Dud and would say hello.

Dud began his career at Silver Lake Golf Club in 1958. He was taken under the wing of Walter Fuchs and the MacIntosh brothers, Dave and Jock. He was one of the younger members of the Midwest, but everyone liked Dud no matter what their age. Dud became involved in the Midwest, becoming a Board member and finally president in 1967. He also became very involved in the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation and the ITF as well. He went through the board chairs before becoming president of both organizations. His most recent involvement was as a board member of the Musser Turf Foundation.

We all remember when Dudley was presented with GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award in 2003. I still remember his remarks that evening, and how everyone talked about them for the remainder of the conference.

There are many of us who worked for Dudley, beginning at an early age, toiling our way through the ranks to finally become his assistant. We were all well-prepared for the next step—our own jobs as golf course superintendents. He was always there if anyone needed advice or just someone to talk to. Dud was there for others as well. He would call or write a note complimenting someone on a job well done, and this always took place not in the limelight, but behind the scenes.

I will miss my good friend Dudley very much. We haven't seen each other as much as we would have liked



Marlene and Dudley in January 2001.

A few years earlier...

over the past few years, but we were in each other's thoughts. When we talked, he would always ask how things were going, and what problems we were having. He wanted to know how many new guys were in the area, and how the old-timers (of which I am one) were doing.

Cuddles loved life, his family and his profession. Dudley H. Smith will be missed. Rest in peace, my FRIEND!

—Ed Fischer

Dudley H. Smith—son of H. Dudley Smith—grandson of Dudley H. Smith and so on, according to lore, to the beginning of history.

Dudley came from Kingston, NY, where during the Depression years he caddied at the local country club at the end of their block. At this early stage of life, Dudley's wont in life became set to golf course work.

I had the privilege to be one of the first in the Chicago area to meet him. The GCSAA convention was in Ohio just prior to his moving from an assistant's job at Hershey Country Club to Chicago. I have seen a picture of Dud sitting at the banquet table with both John Coghill and Ben Warren—two men who would soon become important in his life and career, although Dudley didn't yet know either of them.



Ben Warren, along with Bert Rost, Oscar Borgmeyer and my father, Paul E. Burdett, had incorporated the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation in 1957. John Coghill, owner of Silver Lake Country Club, was soon to become Dudley's employer for over the next 40 years.

Dudley's father was a salesman while Dud and his siblings were growing up. Dudley understood and had compassion for all salespeople who were part of his life. My dad was selling to Silver Lake Country Club when Dud came to be superintendent—Dad addressed Dud as "Sonny" or "Kid," terms that were not fully appreciated. At that time, I was running around and delivering for the family business.

I was invited by some superintendents, including Eddie Wollenberg, Roy Nelson and Dudley, to join the superintendents at the Ranch House in Chicago Heights for their regular Monday lunch. Dud passed me an

order that he had written down. When I gave the order to Dad, he said, "You might as well take care of the Kid, you've earned it." Of course, he meant that I should continue to call on Dudley and be his salesman, since Dud had not cared to be called "Kid" by anyone.

At that time, Dudley had a room at the end of the porch in the old Silver Lake clubhouse (at that time, the Coghills' home). After a long day of being on the road, I would stop there and get up a gin rummy game with Dudley. The deck of cards was always kept warm. By this time, Marilyn and I had been married and when I got home, I told her that Dud had wanted to play gin—but didn't tell her that **both** Dud and I enjoyed the relaxation of playing gin. At golf course superintendents' meetings, several of us had a gin game—very seldom did anyone lose very much, yet we had lots of fun and relaxation.

A certain superintendents' meeting at Palos Country Club became quite a legendary case of how obsessed we were with gin rummy. There were four of us playing gin at that meeting: Mike Bavier, Peter Voykin, Dudley and me. They closed the clubhouse between 11 p.m. and midnight. Someone obtained the keys for the American Legion clubhouse in Orland Park from Peter Vandercook, so we moved the game there "but just for a little while."

Marilyn called my dad about 1 a.m. and Dad drove the route to Palos Country Club and found that the clubhouse was locked and there had been no accidents reported that night. About 7 a.m., Peter called what he thought was his shop to tell the men their instructions for the day and said, "Honey, why are you at the shop?" He had dialed his home instead, where his wife had answered the phone.

*(continued on page 38)*



*Back in the day . . .*



*Dudley with his old-timer friends (L to R) Albie Staudt, Paul and Peter Voykin, and Eddie Fischer.*



*With Peter Voykin.*



*On a recent (and successful) fishing trip on Lake Michigan.*



*The Smiths on an Alaska cruise in 2001.*



*Helping out with the U. S. Open at Olympia Fields.*



The game broke up—later that day after a short sleep, I drove to see the other three culprits. Dud was spraying greens, Mike was mowing greens with his walking greens mower (not very straight, though) and Pete was resting in his office.

Dudley enjoyed teasing salesmen—especially me.

I regularly used to walk out on the course to see the superintendent rather than wait in his office for the rest of the day. One of the grounds personnel at Silver Lake was Phil. Phil had a specific truck for doing his work and it was identified as “Phil’s truck.” As I was walking out to see Dud, I saw Phil’s truck several times going hither and yon around the course. I kept looking for Dudley in hopes of obtaining a sale. It was over an hour before I went back to the shop and perhaps 15 to 20 minutes later, Dudley came to the shop. When he came in, he explained that he had been driving “Phil’s truck.”

When I got into my own business after Dad passed on, Dudley suggested that I have made a heavy-duty stake for holding rope to mark off special areas. The stakes available at that time were of very thin metal. After some time, I got a manufacturer to make me some and as that took off, additional items were added to the line and Master of the Links split off from the rest of the company.

At one time when the convention was in Las Vegas, Marlene and Dudley had flown out and rented a car. I drove out since I had to take the booth set-up with me. They then drove to see some friends and relatives. During their travels, they picked up a cradle that one of their kids had used quite awhile prior so their new grandchild could use it. They brought it back to Vegas to where I was staying and asked if I had room to take it back with me to their house. Of course, I told them that there was plenty of room in my car. Nobody could say no to a request from Dudley and Marlene. When I delivered it to their house in Frankfort, it was late in the day, and Dudley invited me to have some ice cream with them. (He said he always had ice cream last thing before bed.)

There was a time when Dudley was in the hospital in Joliet. Rick called me and I went down to see Dudley

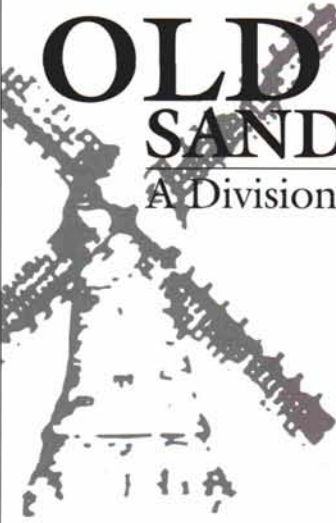
with a deck of cards. We sat and played gin for several hours. When he asked, “Who won?” I said, “This one is on me”—a comment that is always rare indeed. Dudley was always ready to live up to his debts and obligations.

I retired several years ago. Dudley never wanted to retire. We have seen each other infrequently since then—but

still a phone call or a gin game would be scheduled, and we both still enjoyed being together.

All of us have been blessed by our individual exposure to Dudley H. Smith.

—Jim Burdett



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