

## TRIBUTE

Brad Anderson, CGCS

# Remembering Ted Woehrle



*On September 9, 2010, Theodore W. Woehrle, CGCS, passed away of complications from Lymphoma. Ted is survived by Mary, his wife of 50 years, sons Theodore Jr., Bruce and Chris, daughter Mary Smith, and seven grandchildren. On the following day the flag at Oakland Hills Country Club flew at half staff to honor the passing of its former greenkeeper.*



From his humble beginnings as a boy working on his father Herman's golf course at the Kankakee Valley Country Club, till he finally hung up his hat at The Orchards Golf Club in 2003, Ted Woehrle's life in greenkeeping spanned an era of almost 60 years. And it is no exaggeration to say that he distinguished himself more than any other greenkeeper. Consider the following:

He was one of the first graduates of Purdue University's four year Turf Program - he remains the only turf graduate to receive the school's Ag Alumni Certificate of Distinction; he served as President of the GCSAA and two of its local chapters; while serving on the GCSAA Board of Directors he helped to steer development of the Certification program for golf course superintendents - he himself was one of the first to achieve certification; while at Beverly Country Club he hosted two Western Opens and two Woman's Western Opens; at

Oakland Hills Country Club he hosted two PGA Championships, the U.S. Open, and two U.S. Senior Opens; at The Orchards Golf Club he hosted the U.S. Public Links Championship; he grew-in two golf courses - Point O' Woods Country Club being a perennial favorite in the top 100 golf courses in America; he served as Editor of two GCSAA chapter newsletters; he helped to form the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation, serving also as its President; he personally mentored over 50 golf course superintendents; in 2007 he was inducted to the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame.

But what is most amazing about all these incredible accomplishments, is how Ted Woehrle kept his humanity and kindness. Men who attain even half this level of distinction will often compromise some relationships along the way, but not Ted Woehrle. While pushing himself to ever higher levels of achievement and leadership, he somehow found the time to carefully nurture his family, his friends, his colleagues, and all the employees that worked for him.

Even at the end of his life, as he endured the terrible pain of his condition, he was laughing and telling stories of his good

*(continued on next page)*

*Ted Woehrle pictured (back left) in 1962 serving as MAGCS Past President.*

*Back row continued (l to r): Paul Voykin, Don Stewart, Bert Rost, Bill Brady*

*Front row (l to r): Roy Nelson, Don Gerber, John Ebel, Warren Bidwell.*



old days with the Voykin brothers back in Chicago. No complaints or regrets, rather fond memories and the peaceful spirit of a pure conscience.

Whenever we lose one of our own we ought to take a moment to reflect on their life and think of how we may become better greenkeepers and better men. Theodore W. Woehrle, CGCS, just might be the best man we have ever had in our profession. He certainly set the bar very high, and yet not beyond our ability to follow his example. He really was just an ordinary man, but with an extraordinary heart for others. And he would be the first to tell you that even this came to him as a gift from God.

I think that in the end, Ted would like to be remembered as a man of faith, who only accomplished what God enabled him to. -OC



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