



# Carl Hoppman

## Remembered

Members of the Midwest

All know the Midwest is a collective unit of individuals; each person is significant, appreciated, and a value to the group and the golf industry. Once in a while an individual is able to make a difference in the lives of many fellow members, impacting the way they work and the way they live. Carl Hoppman was one such member of the Midwest. He was a fellow Golf Course Superintendent who always served others and the game of golf with a generous heart and as one friend explained, “an upbeat soul, a pure delight to be around.” Those who knew him miss Carl. We asked friends to share a few words with all:

As an aspiring golf course superintendent in the mid 1970s I had my first encounters with Carl Hoppman. He was a board member of MAGCS and soon would become president of the organization. I was mesmerized by his leadership skills and also the way he carried himself. Carl dressed impeccably and was the consummate speaker at any and all MAGCS events. He had the ability to get others involved and participating in MAGCS and encouraged the younger members to get and stay involved.

Over all the years Carl had a love for his family, his friends, and his fellow MAGCS members. As a proud Grandpa he did all he could to help raise his grandkids. He stayed actively employed and involved in the golf arena up until his passing. Greenkeeping was in his blood, and he mentored many of us in so many ways.

Carl will be sorely missed by more people than he would ever know. – **Bruce Williams**

I didn't have many opportunities to visit with Carl, but I remember him being one of the most dignified gentlemen ever to grace our profession. He always seemed patient and understanding. Even when his son, Tod, was so tragically taken by a drunk driver, Carl comported himself with appropriate restraint. He was an example for us all. – **Fred Behnke**

Carl has probably been the most generous individual supporter in the history of the University of Illinois Turf Program. The

Hoppman Fellowship has helped educate a number of U. of I. graduate students and improved our understanding of turf development and management.

I'll always remember Carl's advice. Many times he told me, “It only costs 10% more to go first class.” Carl WAS first class! – **Dr. Tom Voigt**

So sad to hear the news of Carl's passing. I first met him in my rookie year as a Superintendent, in 1970 at Fox Bend. He was a genuinely kind individual. I remember that first time we shook hands. He had very large hands, and a smile and a heart to match. Whether we were playing golf, having a phone conversation, or commiserating over drinks, it always ended with me feeling better about myself, my effort, and my job. He could always make that happen. What a great man! Rest in Peace, Carl. – **Jim McNair**

It would be difficult to imagine that Carl could have corresponded with anyone without leaving a lasting impression. I have admired his friendly and positive approach to any situation throughout my entire career. He is the definition of a glass-half-full attitude. His unwillingness to fail at anything is evident in the many successes of the Sunshine Course. It would not be what it is today without the time and talent Carl had unselfishly put forth. His smile, storytelling, and vision for the future will be tremen-

dously missed. Those who knew Carl were certainly blessed by the experience. Those who did not know Carl were blessed, as well, by his contributions to our industry. His passion was unparalleled and should serve as an inspiration to all. – **Don Ferreri**

Carl gave me my first job ever as a 16-year-old high school junior in the summer of 1967. I worked for Carl every summer until I graduated from college in 1973. His enthusiasm for the art of maintaining a golf course was infectious. He approached every challenge with a positive attitude. He also had the ability to instill that attitude in everyone that worked for him. He was the reason I changed my career path from accounting (I took one class) to turf management. It was one of the best decisions of my life. Carl didn't have a college degree, but he had a tremendous thirst for knowledge. For those who don't know, it was Carl who approached the CDGA back in the early eighties and convinced the board that they needed a Chicago-based turf advisor or a "family doctor" for the good of the area courses. I had the privilege of serving on that initial search committee, headed by Carl, which eventually hired Randy Kane. I now have the honor to serve as the committee chair. Recently, after Carl's second stay in the hospital, I called him to see how he was doing. He spent about a minute talking about his health and then spent twenty minutes letting me know what I should be looking for in the ideal candidate for the next "family doctor" for our superintendents. Carl always put the needs of his profession ahead of his personal needs. That's why he was a member of the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame, and that's why he was my friend and mentor. – **Mike Nass**

Carl Hoppman, not a better could be had. Carl and I worked together on the MAGCS board for several years as he was president three years before me. There are stories that could be told and were told at his wake between those of us who knew Carl on and off the golf course. I am sure that the mention of "aw just one more Stinger, and we'll go," will bring back memories for some of us. I will miss Carl and his most friendly smile. Peace be with you, CARL!! – **Ed Fischer**

He was a man who had such a way with words. The golf courses he managed were proof of the skill he was blessed with.

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**“How we portray ourselves through our words and actions widely impacts our credibility and successes more so than turf itself.” *Carl Hoppman***

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He was truly a gift to Chicago Golf. Three Cheers for Carl! Rest in Peace. **Ed Braunsky**

My very first memory of Carl was when Roger Stewart brought me as a guest to the Chicagoland Forum Meeting at Evanston CC in 1989. Carl was sitting upstairs smoking and chomping on his stogie, greeting everyone. I believe the keynote speaker was (future Ph.D.) Frank Rossi from University of Wisconsin. At that point I got to know Todd.

My favorite story is from my first foray into the GCSAA National Conference in Las Vegas in 1991, following my rookie year. My wife Lisa was flying home by herself and sat next to an older gentleman who kept a very nice conversation going for the three-hour flight. He said he had grown up in Aurora. After about two hours they realized the golf maintenance tie-in! Most recently Carl spoke at the Winnetka Men's Club Banquets on behalf of fundraising for the CDGA. He and I would one-up each other, blowing hot-air up our skirts. It was fun to talk to our annual pass holders about Carl and the Hoppman family, iconic in the Chicagoland area. Carl was a great man and I will miss him dearly. – **Henry Michna**

Carl Hoppman was the ambassador for golf course superintendents. He never shied away from promoting our profession to anyone. Whether it was club members, CDGA officials, college professors, deans, and presidents, whoever he could talk to, he always presented a professional image of the superintendent. I served on many committees and boards with Carl. He was a role model for being a positive individual and treating everyone equally. He will be missed, but he leaves a legacy unmatched in my career. – **Randy Wahler**

Hard to write a short paragraph about Carl! We could write a book just about what Carl meant to the CDGA turf program, the short course, and the Sunshine foundation. He was an instigator for sure, and knew how to get things done! – **Dr. Randy Kane**

On behalf of the Midwest, Carl, Rest in Peace.



*Carl's photo captured on the night he was inducted into the Illinois Golf Hall of Fame.*