

RAY GERBER 1899 — 1983

Raymond Gerber, acknowledged "Dean" of midwestern golf course superintendents, died July 6th at Elmhurst hospital after a brief illness.

Ray's fifty-five active years in golf course management began at the Woodhill Country Club in Wayzata, Minnesota. After nine years at Woodhill, he moved to the Pine Valley Golf Club in Clementon, New Jersey where he was sent by the Toro Corporation to oversee the use of their mowing equipment. While at Pine Valley, Ray married his wife Julia, also from Wayzata, Minnesota.

Ray returned to the midwest again to help in the construction of the Medinah Country Club in Chicago, Ill. In 1936, Ray took over the position of Golf Course Superintendent at the Glen Oak Country Club in Glen Ellyn, Ill. and held that post until 1970 when he retired to the status of Superintendent Emeritus. For the past 11 years Ray has kept active in Golf as the Editor of the Midwest Superintendents Association monthly bulletin, **The Bull Sheet**. As Editor, Ray received national recognition awards from the National Golf Foundation and from the International Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Ray served his profession well and became president of both the local Midwest Association in 1946 and the International Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in 1950. In 1975, Ray received the highly coveted Distinguished Service Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association, their highest award.

Typifying Ray's devotion to family and profession is the following quotation from his remarks upon receiving the Distinguished Service Award at the 1975 national meeting in New Orleans. "A golf course superintendent should be many things, — To his family, a loving husband and father. To his club, a willing and tireless worker. He should be a loyal man who likes his job as well as being able to get along with everybody. He must have a smile ready even when the going gets rough."

Incidentally, Ray never missed an annual Turfgrass Conference of the Golf Course Superintendents over a forty-three year period ending this past February in Atlanta, Georgia.

Ray is survived by his wife Julia, two sons, Donald, Superintendent at the Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton, Ill., and Dr. Gerald of Duke University, and five grandchildren.

Contributions may be made in Ray's memory to: Illinois Turfgrass Foundation, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801, c/o David J. Wehner, Ph.D.

The deepest sympathy of the members of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents is extended to the Gerber family due to the death of Ray. Ray Gerber has been an inspiration to our association and has made **The Bull Sheet** one of the premier newsletters of golf course superintendents in the country.



A TRUE FRIEND

One of the hardest things a person has to do is to say "Good-bye" to a friend he knows he will never see again. At least, this is the way it is for me. That friend is Ray Gerber. I had the very good fortune to count Ray as my friend and advisor. I really got to know Ray Gerber when I started to work here at Glen Oak C.C. That, in itself, is a story worth repeating.

Ray saw me at one of the Midwest meetings and bought me a drink. During the conversation, he said I ought to stop by and visit with him at Glen Oak in the next week or so. Well, I did, and at the time, he mentioned that he was thinking of retiring and wondered if I might be interested in the job. I started at Glen Oak C.C. on May 1st, 1970, and have been here ever since.

But that first summer was very interesting. I presumed that I would be taking over in a couple of weeks or so, however thru May, June, July, and into August, Ray was on the job every day. He would assign all of the jobs first thing in the morning to get the crew started and assign some afternoon jobs. It was awkward for me to step in and give any jobs to the crew. Many times the men would come in from mowing or raking traps, and they didn't know what next to do, for Ray hadn't told them. I then would assign a job, but always with the stipulation that if Ray asked them to do something else, they were to go do it.

After the first month, Ray suggested that it was senseless for both of us to come in on Sundays, so from then on I had every other Sunday off. That was great; a superintendent getting a Sunday off during the season was sensational.

Our big event around Glen Oak is our "Round-Up", which is held usually around the middle of August every year. Well, our "Round-Up" is two days, and the day after the event when Ray was leaving to go home, he turned to me and said "Catch" as he tossed me his keys. That's all ... "Catch", and with that he got into his car and drove home. He never once after that came back to give me any directions on how to run the course unless he was first asked.

Ray was made an Honorary Member of the club, thus I saw him every day for lunch at the clubhouse. He had many opportunities to ask why this or that is or wasn't being done, etc., but he **never did**. What willpower he had to have to keep quiet. To think that he spent his life here on the course, turned it over to someone else, and then sat back, watched things being done somewhat differently than in the past, without questioning that person - that is a friend.

Good-bye dear friend, I know the Lord will have the grass greener and your editorials will be easier from now on.

Fred D. Opperman, CGCS
Glen Oak Country Club