

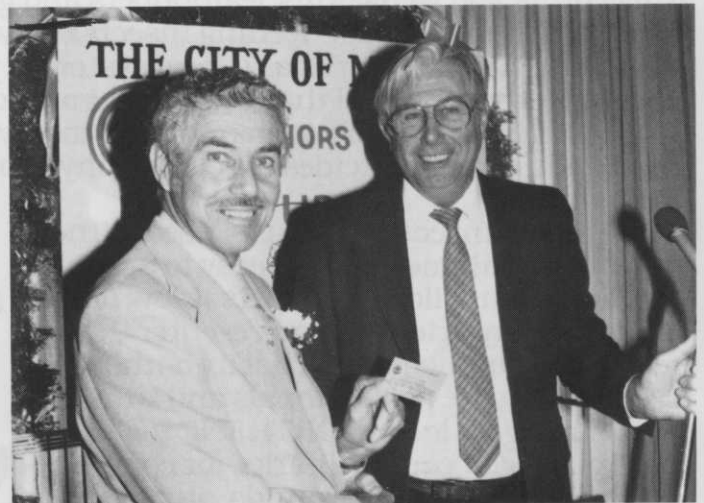
South Florida Sunshine

South Florida Honors Paul Turcotte

By: Alan Weitzel

On January 8, 1985, the South Florida Golf Course Superintendent's Association honored one of its long time ACTIVE members, Paul Turcotte. The meeting was held at Miami Springs Golf Course, one of two city of Miami golf courses that Paul supervises. This was also the last time Paul will host a meeting since he will be retiring from the city of Miami after 31 years of service on January 25, 1985. The South Florida Golf Course Superintendent's Association presented Paul with a plaque to commemorate his 24 years of active participation in the association.

missed one of their national conventions in the last 23 years. Paul has been a member of the Florida Turf Grass Association for 20 years serving as a director in the early 60's. In 1978, Paul was approached by several municipal golf course managers from central Florida to help form a municipal golf course association. In 1981, Paul became the third president of this association.



Paul Turcotte with his wife showing matching gold watches that they received from the City of Miami. Al Howard is in the background making the presentation.

Paul first joined the South Florida Association in 1960 and was nicknamed the "Frenchman" as a result of his French Canadian ancestry. Several years later, he was elected to the board of directors. In addition to his duties as a director, he also served as treasurer, vice president, and finally in 1970 became president. The following year he accepted the presidency of the State Association. Ten years later, Paul was again asked to serve when the South Florida Association was looking to fill the newly created position of external vice president.

Paul also has been very active in other professional trade associations. He joined the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America in 1962, and has only

Paul, the second youngest of six children, grew up on a farm outside of Lewiston, Maine. Public schooling in rural communities such as Lewiston was different than today. The school which Paul attended consisted of a one room school house in which from first to sixth grade Paul was the only one in his class. In sixth grade Paul's family moved to the city. Since there were no more chores to do, Paul immediately got himself a job after school at Dube's Nursery. Six years later, after graduating from high school, Paul became general manager of the nursery at the age of 18. Five years later, Paul was hospitalized for three weeks when an over accumulation of the insecticide, Pyrethins, left him paralyzed. After his recovery, Paul decided it was time for a change. In November of 1952, Paul, his wife and three month old son, headed for Miami. Paul worked approximately nine months with Exotic Gardens before accepting the horticulturist position with the city of Miami. In 1959, Paul took a cut in pay to work on the Melreese Golf Course (formerly LeJeune Golf Course). It was his first exposure to golf course maintenance. In June of 1960, when the golf course opened for play, Paul was superintendent. In 1968, with the retirement of Woody Laughinghouse, Paul took over the maintenance of both city golf courses. As

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Paul's knowledge grew in turf, so did his responsibilities. In 1973, he was promoted to assistant director of parks, and took on the maintenance responsibilities of the city's 92 parks. During this era, Paul became involved in a number of different projects. The first documentation of Lethal Yellow Diseases in Miami occurred ten blocks from the Melreese Golf Course. Paul worked extensively with the University of Florida to try to find a cure to the dreaded disease which eventually took the life of 1,500 palm trees on his golf courses. Paul also was involved in the installation of the Prescription Athletic Turf System in the Orangebowl.



What effect has all this volunteer work had on Paul's home life? What sort of wife would tolerate a husband who spends all his time helping others? Well, fortunately, Paul has a wife who is equally as generous who he met 40 years ago as a teenager in Lewiston, Maine. They have two lovely children who are now grown and seem to have been influenced by their father's example of helping others. His daughter is a registered nurse, and his son who has a Ph.D. in psychology heads a program for the rehabilitation of people with drug, alcohol, and emotional problems.

It is hard to believe that Paul would have time for other outside activities when one considers the amount of time he puts into his job and professional trade associations. For 12 years Paul worked with the Boy Scouts — ten of those years as a scoutmaster. He eventually became the overall chairman of the scouting program in this area. In 1966, Paul approached the leaders of his church about setting up a support group for the prisoners of Dade County. Through his efforts, five programs have been established in Dade County. For 18 years, Paul has spent two days per week, one evening, and one Saturday morning trying to help prisoners find a purpose in their lives. He is very active in his church serving as president of the Saint Vincent DePaul society.



So it is only fitting that in a time when many associations are experiencing apathy from their membership, that the South Florida Golf Course Superintendents' Association honors one of its members for being ACTIVE for 24 years. Paul has set an example which if many of us would follow, would not only make our association stronger, but also enhance our personal lives. ■