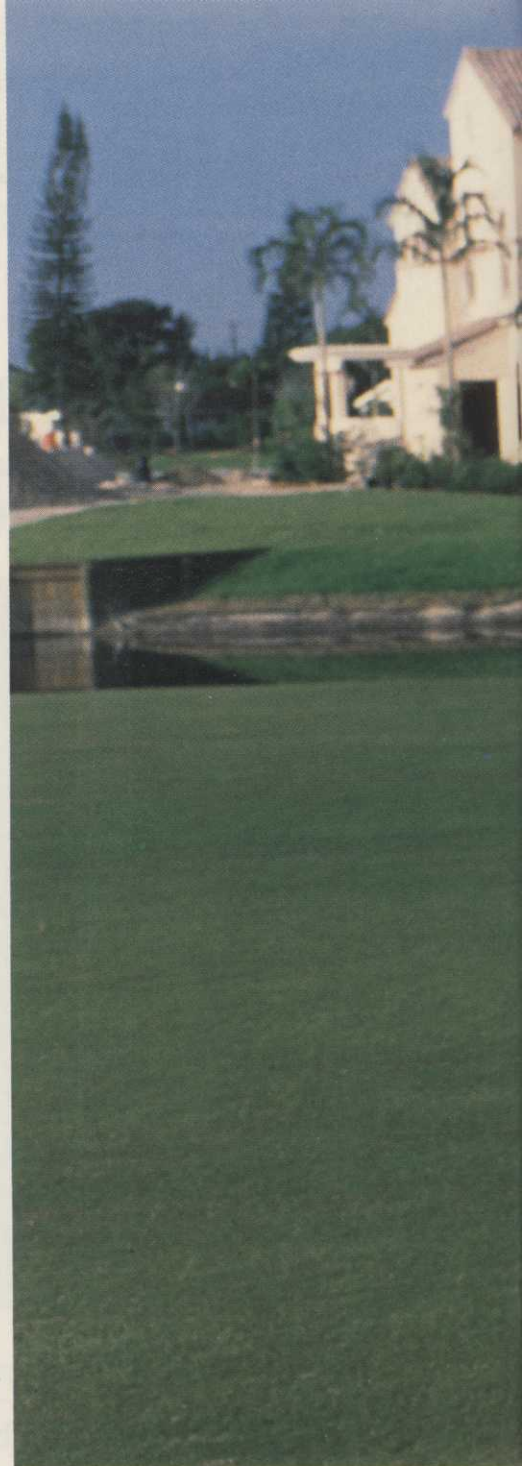


# *Distinguished Service Award*

*Every year, the FGCSA shall recognize a deserving FGCSA Superintendent who has performed outstanding achievements as a golf course superintendent and who has given his time unselfishly in promoting golf course management and unification of the Florida Golf Course Superintendent.*

1985 ..... William Wagner  
1986 ..... Tim Hiers  
1987 ..... Dan Jones  
1988 ..... Mark Jarrell

*'I believe in giving back  
that which has been so  
freely given to me'*



**BY JIM FALLON**

Two days after graduating from the University of Florida with a bachelor of science degree in ornamental horticulture, Mark Jarrell landed his first job. He became the head superintendent at the University of Florida GC, perhaps the only 22-year-old head superintendent in America.

That was in 1973, the onset of a professional career which has seen the continuous personal pursuit of excellence. It





MIKE BAILEY/FGCSA

reached its zenith last autumn when the FGCSA honored Mark Jarrell, CGCS, with its Fourth Annual Distinguished Service Award.

Choked with emotion, the West Virginia native accepted the commendation "in the name of all superintendents. . .the greatest bunch of hardest working guys ... all of you here made this day possible," he said.

Later he was to admit, "That moment was the highlight of my professional life.

No doubt about it, nothing else is even in the same league."

And Jarrell plays in the big leagues. He is head superintendent at Palm Beach National GC and is very active in the affairs of his profession.

"I believe in giving back that which has been so freely given to me," he said.

Locally, he is a past president of the Palm Beach Chapter and has held every other office in that organization except

secretary. No committee has escaped his membership since 1980.

Statewide, Jarrell has been chairman of the public relations committee and a member of the publications, research and FTGA committees.

"He's a pure thoroughbred," said Dick Blake, past president not only of the Florida GCSA, but also of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

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"He's out to win every race and, best of all, he's successful."

Nationally, Jarrell's efforts on behalf of the GCSAA as a two-year member of the public relations committee have not gone unnoticed.

"His work has been a great asset to GCSAA and his support is valued tremendously," said John Schilling, executive director.

"Mark's among the most articulate and thoughtful spokesmen for the profession in this country," adds Pat Jones, GCSAA communications director.

Jarrell is a director of the Florida Turfgrass Association, where he sits on the awards, funding-endowment and superintendent affairs committees

Although he holds a four-year degree, Jarrell says continuing education is the key to success as a superintendent.

He became certified in 1980, despite some difficulty with the financial management section of the six-hour test.

"If I had it to do over again, I would have taken more business management courses in college," says Jarrell. He also says he probably would recommend the three-year associate-degree program at Lake City College over the four-year program at Gainesville to any youngster aspiring to become a superintendent.

"They have an outstanding program up there and they don't have anybody at Gainesville who's really doing anything in golf right now," says Jarrell, who also finds time to write a regular column for *Golfweek*, the nation's weekly golf newspaper.

"Even though he claims no training as a writer other than paying attention in English class, Mark was one of the best writers on my staff — and I'm including the full-time writers and editors," says Larry Kiefer, former executive editor of *Golfweek* and soon to become publisher of *The Florida Green*.

"He gave us immediate credibility with superintendents and, even more importantly, he was single-handedly responsible for raising the consciousness of our readers on what it takes to maintain the golf courses they tear up."

Doing those routine chores of maintain-



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Mark Jarrell

ing a golf course are "to me, the most difficult part of the job," says Jarrell. "Normal routine maintenance is boring. I like being able to use my own creative abilities. I love getting involved in construction projects."

Jarrell, who likes nothing better than climbing aboard a cat and shaping some dirt himself, hopes someday to focus his creative abilities as a golf course architect.

"It's just a dream," he says. "It will be very difficult to achieve.

"Everybody who has made a few thousand dollars on the Tour hangs out a shingle as an architect, even if he doesn't know the first thing about what it takes to build and maintain a golf course. They lend their names to the real architects and then collect 70 percent of the fees. It's not fair."

His interest in architecture goes way back.

After graduating from high school in New Smyrna Beach, where he lettered in baseball, basketball and cross-country, Jarrell's father — the local city manager — suggested Mark take a part-time job at nearby Sugar Mill GC, then being constructed under the supervision of golf course architect Lloyd Clifton, a family friend.

"That's when I made up my mind about my future," said Jarrell. He says Clifton and his turfgrass professor at Gainesville, the late Dr. G.C. "Granny" Horn, have had the greatest influence on his professional life.

Jarrell worked at Sugar Mill on vaca-

tions and holidays. In 1975, he left the University of Florida course to take the top job at Sugar Mill, where he remained until he went to Palm Beach National in 1979.

Despite his heavy professional involvement, Jarrell, the father of three — Robert, 18, Steve, 16 and daughter, Jamie, 5 — says his family is the center of his existence.

"Everything begins and ends there."

His most trying moments came in 1987 when Jamie became ill but, for months, doctors could find nothing wrong. Finally they discovered a brain tumor.

Three operations later, Jamie has reached 95 percent recovery.

"We're expecting full recovery in due time," he said. "Words can't describe my gratitude. . . I've had tough days, but that was the most trying time of my life," he added.

When he needs relief from pressure, Jarrell packs SCUBA gear and heads for places like Cozumel on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

"I've always loved the water, especially exploring the ocean's floor. That's exciting," he said.

He holds membership in the Cousteau Society (underwater exploration), Wilderness Society (environmental affairs) and the American Space Foundation (outer space exploration). He also collects coins and Civil War Memorabilia.

"Balance seems to be the key to a full life," he says.