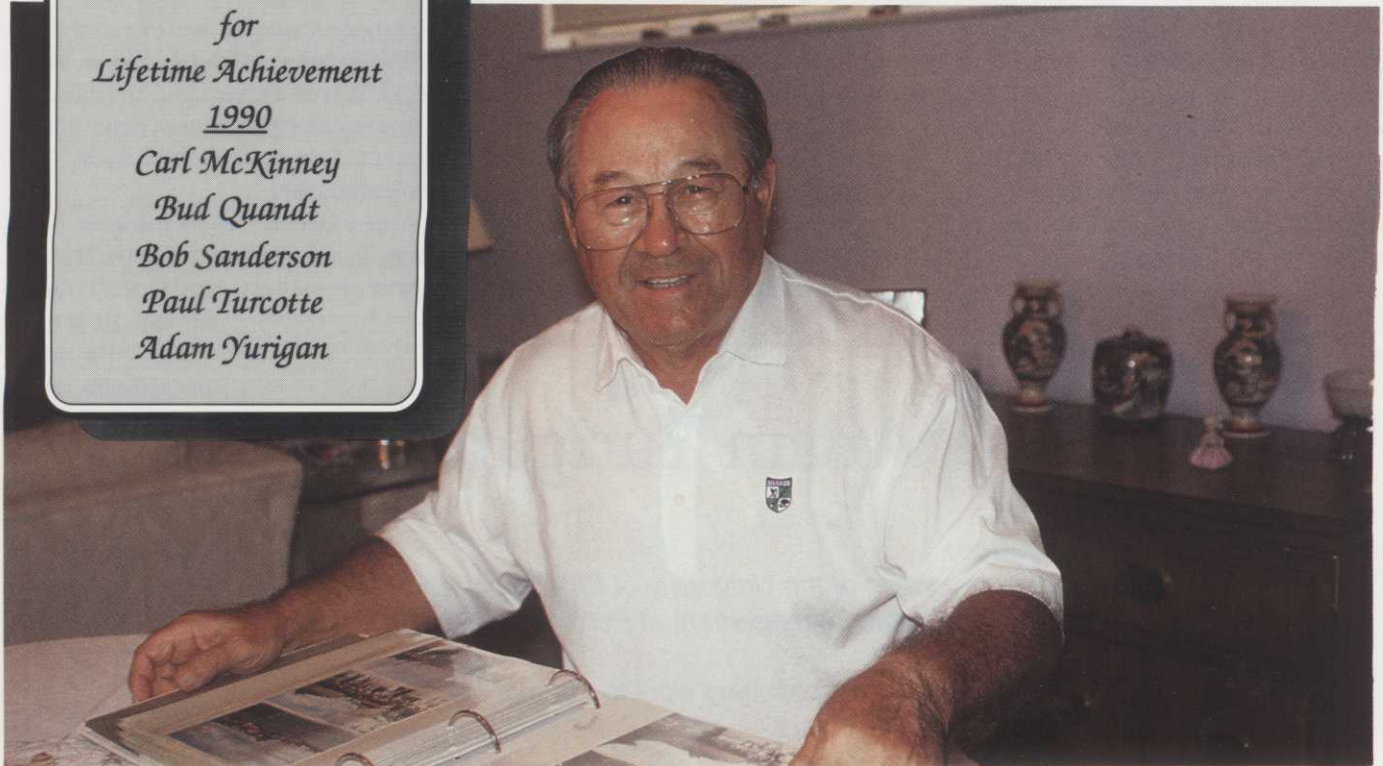


*President's Award
for
Lifetime Achievement
1990*

*Carl McKinney
Bud Quandt
Bob Sanderson
Paul Turcotte
Adam Yurigan*



Adam Yurigan

Photo by Kit Bradshaw

BY KIT BRADSHAW

Adam Yurigan has been teaching all of his life.

Through personal example and through years of helping young trainees through the ranks, the winner of the FGCSA's President's Award for Lifetime Service has taught golf course superintendents the value of honesty, hard work and professionalism.

A former caddie who turned professional as a young man and garnered several open championships, Yurigan has been both a golf professional and a golf course superintendent during his career.

"When I got out of the Army in 1945, my wife and I moved from Pennsylvania to Iowa, where I helped to renovate golf courses that had deteriorated during the war years," Yurigan says. "After working with my father-in-law in the auto business for a short time, I decided to return to golf and went to work at the Geneva CC as a pro/superintendent. In those days, if you made \$1,000 a month, it was great pay. The golf courses couldn't afford to have both a golf professional and a superintendent, so I did both jobs. It's a different era now," he says.

It was at Geneva, then later at the All-Vet

Center, Mason City CC and finally at Echo Valley in Des Moines that Yurigan established a program for young superintendent-trainees.

"I had at least three key people on the crew, and I supplemented the crew with high school kids that wanted to get into the business," Yurigan says. "They were able to make money for the summer and they got experience. If they worked hard, they always had a job every summer, as long as they wanted it."

Yurigan stayed at Mason City CC for several years, upgrading the course by installing the first water system in the state and by working to establish the course's reputation. He later went to Echo Valley CC in Des Moines.

Through a friend, Yurigan was hired as the golf course superintendent at Rio Pinar in Orlando, at that time the site of the PGA Tour's Citrus Open.

You'd feel fortunate to cross paths with Adam

"I had a good resume and had a lot of good recommendations — something I think every golf course superintendent should have," Yurigan says.

"One of the things I brought to Rio Pinar was my expertise in bentgrass. In the North, we had bentgrass greens and bluegrass fairways. I was the first person, to my knowledge, to plant bentgrass on Florida greens. Now all the high-class courses in Florida have bentgrass overseeding in the winter," he says.

It was during this time that Yurigan helped found the Central Florida chapter of the FGCSA and served as its first president. "At that time," he says, "Central Florida was a one-horse area. Look at it now!"

Yurigan stayed at Rio Pinar, despite some difficult times with budget and equipment, but in the early 1970s, he heard there might be an opening at John's Island.

"I called Mr. (Lwydd) Ecclestone and asked him about the possibility of working at John's Island, and he hired me shortly after interviewing me. I don't think people

really knew Mr. Ecclestone. He was one of the finest men I've ever worked with. His door was open to me to discuss the course, and he understood that it was important that the golf course superintendent have control of what goes on at that course," Yurigan says.

With Ecclestone's encouragement, Yurigan started the Treasure Coast chapter of the FGCSA and served as that chapter's first president.

Lee Van Valkenburg, now superinten-

dent at Card Sound GC on Key Largo, remembers his days as Yurigan's assistant at John's Island.

"When Adam took over, it was raw," he recalls. "They were using effluent on the courses and, as a result, the ponds were so clogged the birds could walk on them. But the time we left, you couldn't tell the ponds that held the effluent from the other ponds

They had cut our staff, and I was out there, dragging pumps around the course, working until six or seven at night. And there was Adam, manning machinery, right with us, trying to help get the course ready," Van Valkenburg says.

"I feel fortunate to have crossed paths with Adam in my career," he says. "I would not be where I am today if I hadn't worked

for him. He is a real teacher. He makes the assistant superintendents learn everything they can about the course. There isn't a job we didn't learn. He let us feel the pressure of the job, he made us lead our crew and coordinate the work and made us tie these jobs together so that there was a workable plan in maintaining that golf course. We knew he was ultimately responsible for the course, but he guided us, and made us think, and learn and understand everything that was necessary to maintain a golf course. I think sometimes superintendents keep their assistants in the dark. Adam didn't. And because of this, all of us were confident that we knew how to run a course.

"I have never met

a man who was more honest and professional and more ethical than Adam Yurigan," Van Valkenburg says. "Even though he might rub people the wrong way sometimes, he still maintained his integrity. I miss working with him."

Yurigan brought the expertise gained at John's Island to the new course at Hawk's Nest in Vero Beach, serving as an interim superintendent while the course was being constructed. By this time he was in his

Adam Yurigan

Age: 74

Education:

Studied two years at the University of Pittsburgh; additional studies in turfgrass management at Purdue University.

Current Position:

Retired; does some consulting work in turf management and golf course management.

Previous Employment:

Former golf course superintendent at Vero Beach CC, Hawk's Nest, John's Island, Rio Pinar, all in Florida and Mason City and Echo Valley, in Iowa.

Other Employment:

U.S. Army, golf professional.

Professional:

Started both the Central and Treasure Coast chapters of the FGCSA, and served as the first president of each.

Personal:

Married to Elizabeth since 1943. Children: Nancy owns car dealership with her husband in Mason City, Iowa; Pat, of Orlando, is a registered nurse working with lawyers on malpractice investigations; Lori, manager of special marketing at Disney World in Orlando; Mike, assistant golf professional at Isleworth CC in Orlando.

on the property.

"When Hurricane David came through, it took us three days just to clear things up to get around and see the damage — 100-year-old oak trees were uprooted all over the course. It took us 10 days to clear the course so it could be put back after the hurricane hit.

"I can remember one month we had 20 inches of rain and we were trying to get the course ready for the Ladies Western Open.

sixties and he decided to look at doing more consulting and less hands-on golf-course maintenance.

Vero Beach CC requested his services, and again he worked with the club until a superintendent could be found. "I told them they needed time and a young man to bring their course around," Yurigan says. "I established the maintenance program for them, and was able to increase the budget and bring in new machinery to get the course in better shape. Now Roger Welker is in charge of the course and it is in better condition than when I first saw it."

Yurigan says he has been involved with the PGA of America and the GCSAA for more than 20 years. There have been many changes to the industry in his long career.

"Although I never went for my certification as a golf course superintendent — I was too old, I felt — I've told all the young men who worked with me that certification would get them in the door. There are a lot of fine superintendents who don't have certification and are very qualified, but I

think it's a different game now and it's much harder on superintendents than it was when I was younger.

"Members expect you to maintain the course like you do when you have a tournament. You have to work with a lot of different professionals — architects, managers, consultants — and still remind them that you are a professional who knows the course and who is the one that is ultimately responsible for the condition of that course. You need larger budgets and more people to maintain a course and all the equipment in good condition.

"I think that more than anything, a golf course superintendent needs to be truthful with people," Yurigan says. "You have to realize that sometimes it will be difficult and you'll have to fight to get things done right. But if you are good, you don't have to worry about getting another job. When golf course superintendents take a stand on the creation and maintenance of a course and stop worrying about someone else taking their job, they'll be better off." 🦅

Adam Walsh Child Resource Center Benefit Tournament to be played Sept. 14

The South Florida GCSA invites your participation in the Seventh Annual Adam Walsh Child Resource Center Benefit Golf Tournament. The tournament will take place Saturday, Sept. 14, at the Clubs of Inverrary, Lauderhill, Fl.

Enjoy a day of golf, food, beverages and as always spectacular prizes, while supporting an organization dedicated to protecting our greatest asset, our children.

Entry forms will be mailed to members of the Everglades, Palm Beach and South Florida Chapters. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Bob Klitz at 305-733-7551 or Bill Entwistle, Jr. at 305-435-6169. We look forward to seeing our friends from past tournaments and making new ones at this year's tournament.

— David Lottes

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