

# Superintendent for 34 years at Belleair

## Workhorse member of FGCSA, chapters

BY PHILIP PETTUS

When Harvey Phillips began work as a golf course maintenance employee on Dec. 13, 1950, he thought he was taking a temporary job. Using a pick axe, shovel, rake and such, he became one of the maintenance crew at Belleair Country Club in Largo (Pinellas County).

"I grew up in the citrus business and got into golf courses by accident," he explains. "I took the job as temporary work and then fell in love with it."

Within three years he was the assistant superintendent and when drafted by the U.S. Army in 1954, he was told by his employer, Belleair owner Bernie Powell, that when he got out of the army his same job would be waiting for him.

Harvey did return two years later and has continued working at the Donald Ross-designed course ever since.

Harvey said he received a lot of encouragement from course owner Powell, superintendent Harvey Meeks and club pro Tommy Harmone in his early years. He became superintendent in 1958 after Meeks retired.

As one of the longest-tenured golf course superintendents ever in the state — about 34 years with the same golf course — Phillips has been a workhorse member of the professional organizations that served the golf and turfgrass industry through the years.

Phillips has been a hardworking member and served as president of the Florida West Coast Golf Course Superintendents Association (president two terms), the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Florida Turfgrass Association. He continues as an active member of each organization as well as the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. He has held all offices and served on the board of directors of both the FTGA and the FWCGCSA during the years.

In addition to his recent FGCSA President's Award for Lifetime Service, Phillips was cited in 1975 for 25 years of outstanding service to the FWGCSA. And,



### Harvey Phillips

**Superintendent:**  
Belleair Country Club, Belleair (Pinellas County)

**Years on the Job:** 34

**Years in Profession:** 41

**Organizations & Awards:**  
FGCSA Presidents Award, 1991  
FTGA Wreath of Grass, 1977  
FWCGCSA Award for 25 years of outstanding service (1975)

**Military Service:** U.S. Army

**Family:**  
Married 38 years to the late Thelma Phillips; daughter Janet Wallace, teacher at Safety Harbor Middle School

**Relaxation:** Music and camping

*President's Award  
for  
Lifetime Achievement*

*1991*

*Tom Mascaro*

*John Hayden*

*Harvey Phillips*

*C.R. "Bud" Pearson*

*Carl Smith*

in 1977, he received the FTGA's top award, the Wreath of Grass.

Among the people who have influenced and helped him over the years, Phillips points to Dr. Roy Bair, Dr. G.C. Horn, Harvey Meeks and Tommy Harmone.

"Dr. Bair was our consultant when I started work at Belleaire. I worked hand in hand with Dr. Bair for many years," Phillips said. "I worked with Dr. Horn on many research projects while he was at the University of Florida," Phillips said. He said that while on the FTGA board of directors he also worked on the educational video program.

One of the challenges of his career, he said, was converting two Donald Ross courses to facilitate modern equipment use. He said that was achieved without

destroying the Ross concept.

During his employment at Belleair, Phillips has worked for a private owner, corporate owners and now for a private membership club.

Asked what advice he would give an entry-level professional in golf course maintenance, Phillips said, "Always remember that you are paid to do a job. Do the job to the best of your ability. Do not depend on others to do it for you. And do not be too proud to seek help when needed.

Born in Madison, Phillips moved to the Clearwater area in 1934. He attended grade schools in the area and graduated from Clearwater High School. Except for the two years he was in the Army, he has lived in the same area for the balance of his life.

A family man, Phillips was married for 38 years to his dear wife, Thelma, who died April 3, 1991. They have a daughter, Janet Wallace, who is a school teacher in nearby Safety Harbor.

"The Army and U.S. Steel afforded me the opportunity to travel extensively. I have never found anywhere I like better than Florida," he said.

"Music and camping are what I like to do most for relaxation. I love to play golf but must admit, I do not play the game well." Even so, Phillips' skills as a golf course superintendent have meant many fine golf games for others at Belleair. 🏌️