

**1993 FGCSA  
President's Awards**

Hugh Bebout

Dick Blake

Don Delaney

**Karl Jacob**

Ed Ramey

# A Friend To All

*Karl Jacob came to the U.S. from Romania after World War II and built a stunning career in golf course management*



*Edited and written*

BY JOEL JACKSON, CGCS

## **The Journey**

Karl was born in Moravitz, Romania on June 3, 1933. He came to the United States in 1949. He lived at first in New Jersey, and then later moved to North Carolina.

Karl was with the 5th Armored Division in Korea, where he was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart medals. After his military service was over, Karl served the people in North Carolina as a constable and in the State Police.

Karl attended the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he received his turf management education.

Karl loved to play the game of golf. He once was the North Carolina State Amateur Champion.

He began his career as a golf course superintendent during the construction of Tanglewood Park in Clemmons, N.C., now the site of the PGA Seniors Vantage Championship. From there he went to the Westview Country Club in Miami. His next assignment was the Hamlet in Delray Beach. Then it was on to Martin Downs in Stuart and finally to Black Diamond Ranch where he ended his career.

*Golf Digest* rated Black Diamond

Number 1 in Florida and 24th in the United States. *Golf Magazine* rated Black Diamond 48th in the U.S. and 75th in the world. Karl was really proud of this.

Karl belonged to the FTGA and the GCSAA (32 years). He had also been a member of FGCSA's South Florida, Palm Beach and Seven Rivers Chapters. Karl was proud of his profession and very well respected in his field. He took a lot of interest in young people going into the profession and helped a lot of them along the way.

Karl and his wife, Donna, have three children. Mark lives in Burnsville, N.C.; Lori lives in Lake Worth; and Beth lives in West Palm Beach.

He died April 17 and on Aug. 1, Karl Jacob was posthumously awarded the FGCSA President's Award for outstanding lifetime service to the golf turf industry.

*Donna Jacob*

## **Fellow Travelers and Friends**

The Journey contained the milestones that marked Karl's passage through time. It is the comments and recollections of his friends and associates that gives us a more detailed look at the man held in such high esteem by those who knew him well.

*The FGCSA President's Award for Lifetime Service was established in 1990 to honor those superintendent pioneers who were instrumental in state and local affairs but who may no longer be actively involved in the FGCSA. Qualifications include 20 years or more of service to the turfgrass industry, 10 of which were as a superintendent.*

*Scott Foster, Superintendent, Villa Del Ray GC:*

"I met Karl 13 years ago when I took the superintendent's job at Villa Del Ray. I had seen some tee signs at a club in the area that I was interested in getting for my club. The superintendent told me that Karl Jacob over at The Hamlet made them. Ironically, Villa Del Ray is right next door to The Hamlet. Since we were neighbors, we began to spend a couple of hours a week on each other's courses. We became good friends and fishing buddies.

"I was a young superintendent and Karl was from the old school. He was an excellent superintendent, and I came to look upon him as my mentor, and in many ways as a father figure. He was very particular in his craft and how he conducted business. He was a guiding hand that helped me along my career.

"He shared with me the secrets of the profession and gave me the ability to put things into the proper perspective. He had a real zest for life, which he lived to the fullest. I always had the feeling he was after something bigger and never content with the status quo."

*James Howell, Head Mechanic, The Hamlet CC:*

"15 years ago I worked for Karl at the Hamlet. When he came here, the course needed a lot of attention. He turned it around and made the place immaculate. He was without a doubt one of the best people I ever worked for. He was helpful, fair, and stood behind his employees.

"He was more than a boss. He was my friend.

"We maintained that friendship even after he left The Hamlet. He paid me a great compliment by asking me to join him at Black Diamond, but I had to decline for family reasons. We kept in touch over the years and we would often visit when he was in the area."

*Stuart Bozeman, Superintendent, Seven Rivers G & CC:*

"A lot of people don't know this, but Karl was the first choice as superintendent for Black Diamond. He had a contract with Martin Downs and could not accept the offer. A few years later, when Jim Lerner moved to Naples, Karl was

contacted again and he took the position.

"I was Jim's assistant and served as the interim superintendent until Karl arrived.

"Naturally, I was a little apprehensive the first time I talked to him on the phone. We had never met. He sounded brusque and sort gruff the first time we spoke. I didn't know what I was in for.

"Of course, it turned out to be a great relationship. He was a pleasure to work with. Make no mistake, Karl would tell you what was on his mind. However, he would listen to your point of view and respect your point of view. He may not agree with you, but he listened to you.

"He was an excellent golfer. He loved the game. He also loved to fish, and I took him on many a trip to my secret redfish holes. We developed a great relationship and became good friends away from work."

*Jack Harrell, Sr., Harrell's, Inc.:*

"What I admire most about Karl is that he literally had to pull himself up by his own bootstraps from the horrors, destruction, and displacement of World War II to become one of the best superintendents in the industry. He was a very intelligent man and a super human being.

"Oh, he could be hardheaded in the firmness of his convictions, but he treated everyone with respect. While he was a valued customer, he was also a good friend. He had a very thorough knowledge of turf, and he had a knack for making things work. He definitely had a charisma about him. There was something that attracted him to you, and made you want to be around him.

"I don't believe I have ever met anyone so innately intelligent. I believe, that if he had been raised in a normal environment in his youth and given the advantages you and I have had, he would have been a Nobel laureate in some scientific field."

*Laurie Frutchey, Superintendent, Black Diamond Ranch:*

"I came to Black Diamond as a biology major out of FSU. I had worked on golf courses during my college summers. I started at Black Diamond as a spray technician, then moved up to foreman, and eventually to assistant superintend-

ent all in a two-year period.

"I have been a product of one of Karl's management philosophies of promoting from within. He was one of the best. He had a great knowledge of turf. There wasn't any problem that we faced that he couldn't diagnose and solve.

"He developed an excellent program for turf management, and I try to adhere to it religiously. He also created a wonderful working environment for the 40 people on staff. I admired him for his professional ethics and demeanor. It was a pleasure to work with him. He was also helpful to the other superintendents in the area."

*Terry Lagree, Vice President and General Manager, Black Diamond Ranch:*

"Karl was one the nicest men I ever had the pleasure of knowing. I marveled at his life experiences. He was always straightforward in his thought processes and in dealing with people. He got the most out of his people and he treated them fairly and honestly.

"He was one of the finest manicurists of a golf course that I have ever seen. He could look at a turf problem and diagnose it almost immediately. I think he may have forgotten more about turf than the rest of us have ever learned.

"Karl spent three years with us, and he certainly taught me a great deal about what is really required to groom a golf course. We had a wonderful rapport. He was a good friend. I think our superintendent, Laurie Frutchey, may turn out to be one of the best in the business, because of the time she spent with Karl."

### Playing in Karl's Zone

When I think of Karl Jacob, I think of a real gentleman. One who was respected by his peers of Palm Beach County. He was considered to be one of the very best in our profession. Karl was the host of several monthly Palm Beach Chapter meetings, and the attendance was always very strong, revealing a sense of loyalty to him.

When Karl told us he was going to leave Palm Beach County to relocate to Black Diamond in Lecanto, we realized we losing a good friend. Afterwards, when we would run into Karl at national con-

ferences, he would say, "When are you Bailey Boys going to come up and see me at the Diamond?" My brother Dave and Daniel Zelazek would go up to take photos for the *Florida Green*, but work never gave me the time to go along.

Finally, my timing was perfect during a Crowfoot Open weekend three years ago, and Mark Jarrell, Ed Mullen, and I made the trip to Black Diamond. Karl treated us like royalty, buying lunch and arranging for a round of golf. We went to the range and I tried to find my golf swing. I was really psyched to play. I had seen all the great photos of the famous quarry holes. I had the pleasure of riding with Karl and I was looking forward to a day away from my busy routine.

Because Karl knew we were coming for some time, I kept teasing him about how he had "prepped" the course just for us. It was in absolutely perfect condition! No scalp marks or weeds were to be found anywhere! Karl said, "Oh no, we're in lousy shape with all sorts of problems." I

kept saying, "So, where's all the problems? The place looks perfect to me."

The conditions were so ideal that I was lulled into playing some really good golf. This is very uncommon for me. As a rank amateur often struggling to break 100, I have never experienced that "zone" the professionals talk about.

On this day, however, my shots were flying true. I was hitting the ball where Karl told me to aim it on the quarry holes. I actually parred those three holes! It was scary! Maybe I was finally playing in the "zone." I was sad to see the 18th tee come up, for the day would soon be over. I think I shot a 79 that day. Not bad for a guy who had hoped to just break 100.

I know it was the day, the course, and Karl that helped put me in that "zone." In fact, we were both playing better than we deserved. Karl kept complaining of a stiff back, but I know he was playing pretty darn well. He invited us back, but next year I was too busy with work. Now, I know I'll never get the chance to do it

again. If I ever do find that "zone" again, I'll bet Karl will be looking over my shoulder.

Karl, we'll miss you.

Mike Bailey

### Requiem

I can't recall ever meeting Karl. If I did, at some state or national conference, it was in passing and I never got to spend any time with him or get to know him at all. From researching this article, I can see that was my loss. You only had to hear the respect and admiration in the voices of the people I interviewed to know they loved him dearly. It is to them I dedicate this passage by Thomas Hughes:

"Blessed are they who have the gift of making friends, for it is one of God's best gifts. It involves many things, but above all the power of going out of one's self, and appreciating what is noble and loving in another."



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Ed Ramey

# Never stop learning!

*Says Ed Ramey, who got his  
advanced degree from  
the school of hard knocks*

BY JOEL JACKSON, CGCS

**F**rank Sinatra's song "My Way" seems like a fitting theme for Ed Ramey's career. Born in Logan, W.Va. in an era that preceded well-publicized turf programs.

After graduating from Chapmansville High School, Ed served in the Marine Corps from 1955-1959. He earned his advanced degree in the school of hard knocks. He learned his trade by hands-on methodology, as did so many of our pioneering peers.

He fell in love with golf and he pursued it from PGA apprentice to golf course construction and management.

Finally, when the expansion of turf education caught up with the pioneers who had been out there blazing trails for the rest of us, Ed fine-tuned his practical knowledge of turf management with courses at Palm Beach Community College in 1973.

Ed Ramey is not your prototype superintendent. Once, at Keys Gate G.C. he designed the course, and then served as superintendent, golf professional, and golf director! Ed was used to serving in several capacities at most of his courses. That makes him unique in his time, but more and more superintendents are finding themselves in project management positions as their talents are recognized and utilized.

Ed was a PGA apprentice for eight years. His dream had been to become a touring pro. About the time a young

Arnold Daniel Palmer was winning his first PGA tournament, William Edward Ramey realized that he was not going to join Arnie on the tour. When he found out that Arnold's dad was a superintendent, a new direction in golf opened up for him.

"I started out in this business as a caddie and I decided that one day I would love to build a course from the ground up. That dream came true in 1972 when I helped construct the Carolina Club, originally called Holiday Springs C.C.

"One of my fondest memories of my career is taking that jungle and transforming it into a beautiful golf course, and seeing the enjoyment of the people who played the course."

"The best thing about this business is the people you meet and associate with. Not too many professions give you the opportunity to travel to different parts of the country and see the many sides of a golf course. I have enjoyed this profession more than any other type of work I have done. Nothing is as great as the sun on the dew at daybreak!"

For young people or anyone interested in the turf industry, Ed had this advice, "Get as much hands on experience as you can! If you decide to go on and become a superintendent, then get as much education as you can!. Never stop learning! Today, with all the regulations, you must keep up!"

And for someone like Ed, who *did* keep up, there is the President's Award.

**Ed Ramey is not  
your prototype  
superintendent.  
Once, at Keys  
Gate G.C. he  
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superintendent,  
golf professional,  
and golf director!**

## William Edward Ramey

**Family:** Wife, Jeanne. Daughters, Robin and Tara.

**Professional Affiliations:** South Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association(all offices); Florida Turfgrass Association; Past member of the PGA; member of S.C.O.R.E.

### Resume:

**Monroe, Wisconsin**-golf professional

**Holiday Springs C.C.**-Construction, superintendent, golf professional.

**City of Lauderhill G.C.**-Construction, golf director.

**Century Village, Deerfield Beach**-golf professional, golf director.

**Century Village, Pembroke Pines**-Construction, golf professional, golf director.

**Deerfield Country Club**-Superintendent.

**Keys Gate G.C.**-Design, construction, superintendent, golf professional, golf director.

**Kendall Golf Club**-Superintendent

"To receive this award from your peers is a great thrill. It is the greatest honor I have ever received. It is very humbling to be made aware that your peers and friends think so highly of you and your work and contributions. I want to thank all of you."

Sometimes, a man's work is just necessary toil to put bread on the table for the family. For Ed Ramey, the passion for his profession is best described in his own words:

**Authors Note:** Ed Ramey and his family survived Hurricane Andrew, but their house did not. See Ed's story on page 30 in the Winter 1992-93 issue of The Florida Green.

# As Time Goes By

BY ED RAMEY

As time goes by, so does the greenskeeper. In the early years, he was known as the keeper of the greens. He had no computers, automated systems, or the like. He relied on his ability to accomplish his daily tasks.

He arose early every morning. He got his hands dirty. He took great pride in his work. This man was a jack-of-all-trades. He was an operator, mechanic, sprayman, and waterman. More than likely, he was overworked, understaffed, not often recognized by his members, and his peers were scattered. This man could build a golf course from the seat of his pants, and he did some very nice courses.

As time goes by, we acquire a vast amount of knowledge of our profession, and our memberships benefit from this knowledge. We have access to modern technology and science, but let's not overlook the human factors. Every once and awhile we should take a good look at ourselves. Do you go out of your way to say thank you to your staff for a job well done? Get out in the dew! Get your feet wet and let your staff see you! Let them know you appreciate the job they do!

The modern superintendent has to be a very well-educated businessman. We have come a long way in a short time. Let's all continue to learn and grow.

"I never had a day that I did not want to go to the job. It has been a great life"



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