

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Ray Hansen rises to FGCSA pinnacle after only eight years in the state

BY MARK JARRELL, CGCS

It hardly seems possible that Ray Hansen has only been in Florida since 1986. In his eight short years in Florida, his accomplishments on behalf of the Florida GCSA were considered so significant that in 1994 his peers awarded him their highest honor — the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association's "Distinguished Service Award."

Ray characteristically down plays his contributions with a shrug of the shoulders and a remark like, "When you see something that needs to be done, you do it!" Those of us who have had the pleasure of working with Ray on the FGCSA Board and various committees recognize and credit him for his leadership in seeing that projects are initiated and followed through to their conclusions. Leadership is a rare quality, and Ray Hansen has it in spades. When Ray assumed the presidency of the Florida GCSA in August, 1990, the Florida Green cover story about him was appropriately titled, "He Gets the Job Done," and all who know him agree with this assessment.

His proudest accomplishment is the Florida GCSA's USGA spec green at the University of Florida's IFAS research station in Fort Lauderdale. This green is the direct result of another of Ray's inventions — the South Florida Turf Expo. Without the money generated by this Field Day, it is questionable whether or not enough funds would have been available to build the green and sustain its maintenance.

Ray's other contributions to the Florida GCSA include serving as our Voting Delegate at the GCSAA Conference and Show for two years; six years as Chairman of the Fort Lauderdale IFAS Advisory Committee, and various other statewide committees.

For all he's given to us in Florida, it appears Ray's time here is limited. In November, he resigned his position as



Ray Hansen (left) receives the 1994 FGCSA Distinguished Service Service Award from Paul Crawford at the Crowfoot Open banquet.

Golf Course Manager at Delaire Country Club and is actively seeking a job in the "snowbelt" to allow him the freedom of four months off in the winter for travel.

Once Ray leaves the state, it's possible that we'll see him back in Florida often during those long winters. He recently sold his home in Key Largo to his son, Kurt, and although his boat is on the market, it permanently resides with Kurt in the Keys. Deep sea fishing is one of Ray's passions, though a recent six-week trip to the Rockies for flyfishing may indicate a shift in priorities for shallower pursuits.

Ray also enjoys snow skiing, but the subject that lights up his eyes is Penn

State football. Ray graduated from Joe Duich's Penn State turf program in 1960 and has owned season football tickets for 35 years. He had plans to go to the Rose Bowl, and I expect by the time you read this article, Joe Paterno's team will have wasted Oregon and laid a claim to at least a share of the national championship, if not the title outright.

Nothing could cap 1994 for Ray any better. When asked what winning the Florida GCSA Distinguished Service Award meant to him, he replied, "It's the most important award I've ever received, right up there with going to the Rose Bowl!" (There was a twinkle in his eye



President's Award

Bill McKee —

Pennsylvania's loss is Florida's gain

BY ROBERT G. KLITZ, CGCS

In July 1994, the South Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association chose Bill McKee of the Oak Tree Country Club to be the recipient of the President's Award. Bill has been working in South Florida for over 20 years and also had about eight years of experience in Pennsylvania. The purpose of this article is to give the other members of the organization some insight into a key figure in the South Florida community of superintendents.

As incoming President of the SFGCSA, I was given the honor of presenting this

award to Bill at the Crowfoot Open in August. Prior to the formal presentation, it was my pleasure to inform Bill that he had been selected by his peers for this prestigious and highly coveted award. When I told him that he had been chosen unanimously by the SFGCSA board, his emotional reply was, "Is everyone else dead?" After that response, I realized that I was not only going to have some good material for the Crowfoot "roast" presentation, but I might even be able to use some of the more tasteful material in a Florida Green article.

The illustrious Bill McKee was born and raised in Butler, Pennsylvania. Bill

started working at the Butler Country Club when he was 15 during summers while attending high school in nearby Saxonburg. After graduating from high school, Bill continued to work at Butler C.C. during breaks from college. Bill received a four-year degree in Pre-Law History from Grove City College in western Pennsylvania. While working on the golf course during a break in his final year of school, Bill realized that playing golf is listed in a golf course superintendent's job description but not in a lawyer's job description. Now I know Bill didn't just fall off the turnip truck, but did it take

Ray Hansen honored by peers with DSA

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when he said it!).

Ray's Penn State ties are very important to him, and he has given back to the college by serving as President of the Penn State Alumni Association for the past two years. He credits Joe Duich and his informal classes as having the most influence on his career.

Ray's nearly 40-year career in the golf business has been very diverse. He started as a caddie at Ridgewood Country Club during high school in Fairlawn, New Jersey, also spending summers maintaining a pitch-and-putt course. This sowed the seeds, but a two-year stint in the Army, followed by two years pursuing a physical education degree at Panzer College, preceded his formal turfgrass education at Penn State.

His first job out of college was selling golf course supplies for a company called Person's Mill. He then accepted the job as superintendent at Essex Country Club in West Orange, New Jersey, where he had spent his summer internship while attending Penn State. Here he had the

unique opportunity of managing 18 holes of public and 18 holes of private golf course, at the same 36-hole facility. Four years later he became the general manager, responsible for the entire project. Ray considers this his most satisfying position.

Still, four years later, another challenge presented itself, and Ray left to build and manage the two sister resort communities of Lake Naomi and Timber Trails in the Pocono Mountains, including the construction of an 18 hole golf course. Though he enjoyed the challenges provided there, acting more as a city manager than a golf course manager, Ray was ready to move on when he finished putting his kids through college (Ray has a daughter, Cheryl, in addition to son Kurt). He arrived in Florida in January of 1986, surprising friend and PSU classmate, Tom Burrows. Four days later he secured the superintendent's position at Ocean Reef Club on Key Largo. He stayed there for four years then moved up to Delaire CC in Delray Beach staying there for four years until his resignation this past November.

Reflecting on his many years in the golf business, Ray feels the best thing about being a superintendent is the satisfaction of providing a quality golf course for peoples' enjoyment, and the worst thing is trying to do the necessary renovation work in the summer with members around.

Having experienced both warm and cool-season golf courses, Ray sees no particular advantage of one over the other—the differences more or less offset one another.

His advice to anyone contemplating a golf course management career: Serve an internship under a qualified superintendent and work your way up slowly. Not surprisingly, he considers the plethora of turf graduates competing for too few jobs as the biggest problem our industry currently faces. When asked how he'd like to be remembered, Ray answered, "As a superintendent that gave something back to the profession."

There can be no more tangible proof of that than the 1994 Florida GCSA Distinguished Service Award!

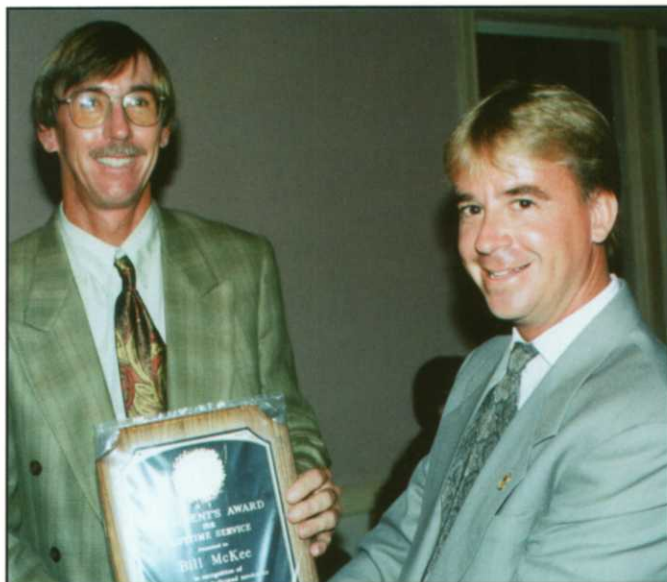
four years for him to figure this out? College in the 1960s. Those were the days!

After graduating from college, Bill decided to celebrate by torturing himself on a 650-mile bicycle trip from Pennsylvania to Boston in 10 days. Bill decided he had enough of the winters in Pennsylvania and he was lured to South Florida by the promise of year-round green grass, mole crickets and bikinis. He is still having problems with all three.

Bill still stays active by playing tennis during his time away from the golf course. One of his favorite playing partners is Allen MacCurrach III of MacCurrach Golf Construction. Allen did some renovation work at Deer Creek and at Oak Tree during the summer of 1993 and Bill would challenge Allen several evenings a week. (I believe the cigars must have finally caught up with Allen and given Bill the edge.)

Bill started to work in Florida at the Golf Club of Plantation in 1973 as a laborer. He worked his way up to superintendent and left to accept the superintendent position at Oak Tree Golf Club in 1988. Bill is still the Golf Course Superintendent at this private club and is responsible for the 18-hole golf course, practice facility, and clubhouse grounds.

Bill was President of the SFGCSA for two years in the late 1980s and served on SFGCSA board for five years. He is a member of the GCSAA, FTGA, and has served on the Broward County School System AgriBusiness Advisory Board for two years. Bill has been a major part of the SFGCSA/Adam Walsh



Bill McKee (left), recipient of one of the 1994 FGCSA President's Awards was roasted handily by his good friend and presenter, Bob Klitz.

Golf Tournament Committee for the past seven years. This is a fund raising tournament for the Adam Walsh Child Resource Center that has raised over \$50,000 over the past ten years to help find and aid missing children and their families. This



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tournament took on even more significance for the superintendents involved in South Florida with the recent child abductions and murders that have made headlines nationwide.

During Bill's twenty years in South Florida he has been assisted by almost all area superintendents by trading equipment, ideas, and suggestions and borrowing equipment or supplies during a breakdown or shortage of materials. Early in Bill's career he attended a turfgrass course at Broward Community College with Dr. Max Brown as the instructor. Dr. Brown was of great assistance when Bill was learning to handle the difficulties of growing quality turfgrass in South Florida.

Phil Amman was another pioneer of the turfgrass industry in South Florida who had a significant impact on Bill's career. Phil built the Golf Club at Plantation, started the SFGCSA, and offered a great deal of encouragement to young Mr. McKee as he started out in this business.

Elroy Timmer, part owner of AmerAquatic, Inc., also was a significant contributor to Bill's early success in this area. Elroy was the individual who contacted Bill when Orthene first became labeled for mole cricket control in Florida. One of Bill's most memorable moments was experiencing the thrill of driving over hundreds of mole cricket bodies doing the "Orthene Shuffle" the morning after that initial treatment.

**1994 FGCSA
Presidents Awards**

- Bill McKee**
- Paul Nevers
- Lou Oxnevad
- Joe Snook
- Royce Stewart
- Lonnie Stubbs

Some of the most dramatic changes in the industry that Bill has witnessed include the introduction of the Verti-Drain aerifier which brought him several years of successful aerifying programs at Oak Tree. Also, the changes from manual labor to complex equipment, walk mowers to triplexes, and back again to manual labor, has been an interesting display of how some of the older techniques are still the best.

As Bill reflected on some of his past experiences and thought about the future of our industry during our interview, he mentioned several key points that might be beneficial for those starting in our industry to ponder as they're mowing that first green in the morning. First, be patient. Spend your time on a crew gain-

ing the knowledge, making mistakes and suggesting improvements. Spend the early years developing and maintaining friendships and relationships that will be a benefit to you throughout your career. Second, take time to enjoy the environment and wildlife that is around you. We are all very fortunate to work in such beautiful surroundings and we should take every opportunity to appreciate the special environment we are maintaining. Third, don't get wrapped up in your own problems on your golf course! Stay in contact with other superintendents! Join your local superintendent's chapter! Go to meetings! Give yourself the opportunity to discuss your problems so your associates can help you find a solution. Bill's last words of wisdom are to develop some outside interest away from the golf industry. We all need a break to gather our thoughts and recharge our batteries. Too much of the best job will still cause you to lose some of your effectiveness.

Although Bill's family is still up in Pennsylvania, he has started a new family of friends in South Florida.

The close circle of people Bill has assisted over the years throughout the area will attest to his great attitude, willingness to help with area events, and his frequent phone calls and visits to check on fellow superintendents. We are fortunate to have Bill in South Florida, and we are proud of his accomplishments and commitments to the industry in South Florida.

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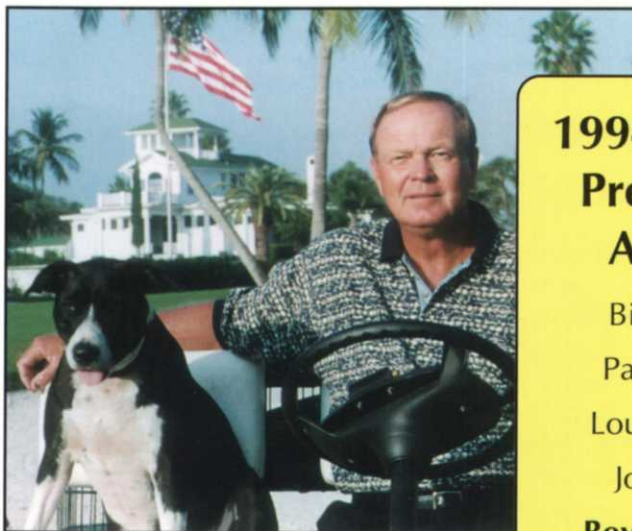


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President's Award



Royce Stewart and Divot at the Gasparilla Inn.

1994 FGCSA Presidents Awards

Bill McKee
Paul Nevers
Lou Oxnevad
Joe Snook
Royce Stewart
Lonnie Stubbs

Royce Stewart —

Leadership by Example

BY JOEL D. JACKSON, CGCS

If you worked on a golf course managed by Royce Stewart, you had a sense of belonging to a family. There is always a closeness, a togetherness of the staff. One of his best traits is his ability to foster a teamwork attitude among co-workers.

How does he do it? Quite simply, he walks the talk. Royce is the epitome of leading by example. As Jack Harrell, Sr. of Harrell's, Inc. put it, "Every day, he's always out there stirrin' amongst 'em." Tommy Morrow, former employee and current superintendent at Turtle Creek in Tequesta, adds, "Royce would often eat lunch and take breaks with the crew. He created a comfortable atmosphere of trust that eliminated the possibility of tension."

Tommy continued, "I started in the golf business at the age of 18 or 19 under Royce at the El Conquistador Country Club in Bradenton. I can remember being given a weedeater and a gas can and walking the course trimming as I went. I learned from Royce that being a superintendent was more than growing grass. As I look back on it now, it was the aspect of professionalism that he portrayed by his

actions. I must have recognized that he used a good formula for success, because I find myself working and eating with the crew like he did."

Royce displays another key behavior of a good leader. He shares information. For Tommy, that information changed his career path. "One day, as we were all taking a break together, Royce shared the results of the FGCSA Superintendent Survey with us. I had learned from Royce the value and potential of a career as a superintendent. It was easy to identify that the higher paying jobs were on the lower east coast. So, I chose to pursue my career from the "suncoast" to the "gold coast", but it was only because Royce cared about his people that I was able learn about the possibilities that existed."

Royce is very proud that five of his former employees have succeeded in becoming superintendents. Besides Tommy, there are David Jackson, Gary Mull, Jon Roxburgh, and Clinton Smith that spent time learning the trade from the "old master." Clint had this to say about Royce, "I was there at El Conquistador along with Jon and Gary. Royce

Experience is also a good teacher

took the time to answer questions and teach us about the business. He's the man I learned it all from. He's as fine a gentleman as you will ever want to meet. I just want to thank him for all he's done for me." Staff development is another key skill of a good leader.

Just as these young men had Royce as a mentor, Royce had mentors and counselors along the way. Royce cites his father-in-law, the late Jamie Jackson, and Jack Harrell, Sr. as having the greatest influence in his early development in the golf business. In 1965, he helped Mr. Jackson build and operate the Skyview Lakes Golf Course in Lakeland, Florida. Royce recalled, "I helped build it, install the irrigation, grow it in, maintain it, and work in the pro shop. I wasn't the superintendent, just a jack-of-all-trades. My father-in-law taught me a tremendous amount about golf course management. He is the person most responsible for my becoming a superintendent. He showed me that this profession could lead me to meet many fine people and all the while providing a decent living for my family, financially."

"My other mentor was Jack Harrell, Sr. I have known Jack since I was sixteen years old. He has been a great friend and a tremendous influence on my life personally and professionally. I have always admired his honesty and integrity. He has offered very wise counsel to me for many years." And so it was that when Royce took his first superintendent position at Seminole Lake Country Club in Pinellas County in 1970, he and Jack used to talk turf management when Jack made

Royce Stewart

1965-69 Skyview Lakes Golf Course, Lakeland, FL

1970-77 Seminole Lake CC, Seminole, FL - Superintendent

1977-83 El Conquistador CC, Bradenton, FL - Superintendent

1983-90 Imperial Lakes CC, Lakeland, FL - Superintendent

1990-present Gasparilla Inn, Boca Grande, FL - Superintendent

his calls. There are many of us who still "consult" with Jack, Sr. when we want a honest answer to a question.

Experience is also a good teacher. While time itself is not a benchmark for wisdom, after 28 years in the business, Royce has learned many lessons. I asked him to share one that he has found to be helpful. He said, "For new superintendents, do your job to the best of your ability and your knowledge. If you have a problem, don't be afraid to ask people for help. You can get into much more trouble by moving ahead into something that you really don't understand. People will actually have MORE respect for someone who is honest enough to admit they need help and are bold enough to seek it. I try to let all of our employees know that **THERE ARE NO STUPID QUESTIONS!** Do not hesitate to seek advice."

The great part about being in the position to receive the President's Award is that you've got lots of highlights and memorable moments to recall. Royce

began, "The Gasparilla Inn is a favorite retreat for former President George Bush. He has been here three times as the guest of the owner, Mr. Bayard Sharp, since I've been here. The first time was while he was still President. They flew in on the Presidential helicopter and landed on the 4th and 5th fairways. The helicopters were so heavy they left 6-inch deep indentations in the turf. I guess we can overlook that, considering who it was."

"The security was incredible in advance of the visit and while the President was there. There were even sharpshooters on top of the pro shop. Every morning at 7 a.m., he would jog the perimeter of the course. During his stay, he would spend half the day playing golf and the other half fishing. Mr. Bush was very nice and I was able to have my picture taken with him."

"Another of my fondest memories was during my stay at Seminole Lake C.C. We hosted the LPGA's Orange Blossom Classic three times. The Classic was one the early tournaments for the LPGA. It was a fun experience. And now, I have the pleasure of the great feeling that comes with being associated with the other recipients of the President's Award. I am privileged to be part of this group. It has been a very fast 28 years, 24 of which have been as a Superintendent."

Royce Stewart has left his indelible mark on those who know him best by setting an example worthy of following. He is a man of integrity, who has demonstrated that actions, indeed, speak louder than words.

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