

# Tom Benefield:

## 1995 Distinguished Service Award Winner

BY SCOTT BELL

At the 1995 Crowfoot Banquet at the Bay Hill Club, Tom Benefield, CGCS was recognized for his outstanding service to the FGCSA as an outspoken champion of new ideas, a leader in representing the golf industry in water use issues and his association work as officer, voting delegate and magazine editor.

Tom was born in Orlando and raised in Alachua. Out of his love for the outdoors and working the land, he began to farm in the mid-70's. He and his partners were among the first to use plastic for growing peppers. Their technique greatly increased yields on their west coast farms and they were doing quite well until a hard freeze ruined them after a few years.

Out of a job and stung by farming, Tom was bitten by the golf bug. In 1981 he graduated from Lake City Community College and he took a job as assistant superintendent at River Oaks in Houston, Texas. From there Tom returned to Florida to take an assistant job at Sun Air CC near Haines City. That job was all encompassing since he was responsible for horses and orange groves as well as the golf course.

Tom's first superintendent job was at Beacon Woods GC in Pasco County. He enjoyed much success there, but his greatest reward was winning over a green committee chairman who did not want to hire him at first. After five years the chairman had grown to respect and admire Tom enough that he did not want him to leave when Tom had an opportu-

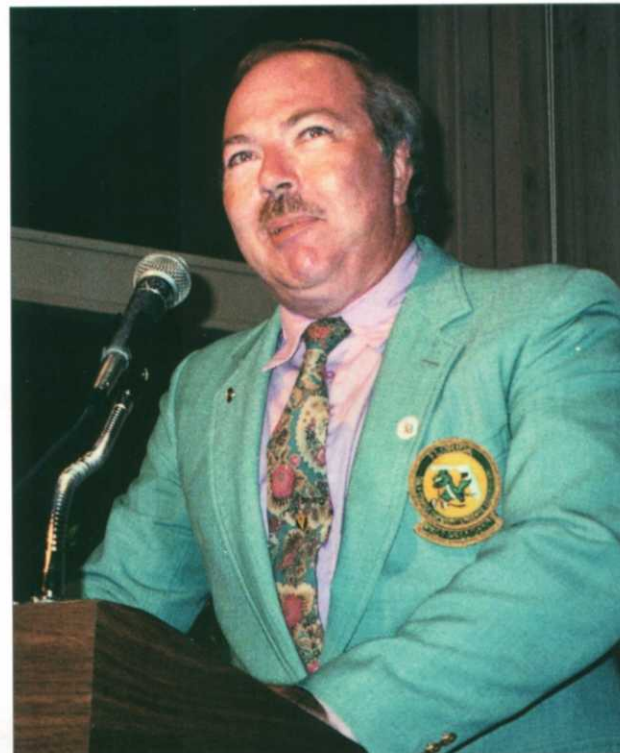
nity to move to JDM in Palm Beach Gardens.

While at Beacon Woods, Tom became interested in chapter service. He was the editor of the West Coast Chapter newsletter, The West Coast Wind and the External Vice President. His good friend, Cecil Johnston, urged him to serve as an FGCSA Officer. Tom's service culminated with his presidency in 1991-92. Tom also represented the FGCSA as the GCSAA Voting Delegate from 1989 to 1993.

While at the JDM Country Club, Benefield became very active with the South Florida Water Management District. He served on water management committees and attended countless district meetings and hearings. He awak-

*Benefield became very active with the South Florida Water Management District. He awakened many FGCSA board members to the water politics and how poorly represented the golf industry was in these issues and debates.*

ened many FGCSA board members to the water politics that went on and how poorly represented the golf industry was in these issues and debates. Many, including Benefield, feel that his best contributions were made at this time. He



*Tom Benefield receives the FGCSA's 1995 Distinguished Service Award at Bay Hill. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

made many contacts and he got superintendents involved in with their local Water Districts.

During Tom's tenure on the FGCSA board, The Florida Green magazine was undergoing changes. After Dan and Irene Jones "retired" from producing the magazine for thirteen years. The FGCSA retained Janlark Communications to manage and produce the publication. Janlark did a great job helping The Florida Green earn Best Overall awards from the GCSAA in 1989, 1990 and 1991. The FGCSA desired to take over management of the magazine once again and the task of reorganizing that effort fell to Tom as the new editor. He did an excellent job with the help of Paul Crawford as Business Manager and Marie Roberts as Advertising Manager. Tom was instrumental in getting more superintendents to write articles and make it truly the voice of Florida superintendents once again. Janlark Communications still assists the FGCSA in producing an award-winning magazine.



Meanwhile, the JDM club and development went into bankruptcy, leaving Tom a lot of property to maintain and not much to do it with. He stuck it out, hoping things would get better. After a couple of tough years, a new owner and the CCA management group arrived and JDM did begin to improve.

Then, disaster struck.

A misapplication of a herbicide instead of a fungicide on thirteen of the East Course greens ruined them. An unfortunate costly mistake by a seasoned veteran spray tech. As superintendent, Tom accepted full responsibility for the mishap and offered his resignation

CCA reluctantly accepted his resignation and Tom has nothing but praise for the generosity and professionalism that CCA demonstrated with regard to his leaving.

Presently, Tom is the Southeast Regional Manager for Eco-Soil Labs. Eco-Soil provides equipment wash down sites and microbial injections through irrigation systems. Tom is very active in the Florida Turfgrass Association and is currently serving as Chairman of the External Affairs Committee.

Through this position he can still work with and help superintendents. Tom is also serving on the Green Advisory Committee of the South Florida Water Management District. He has been instru-



Still active in water use issues, Tom presents FTGA's case for funding a Water Watchdog service at the FGCSA Summer '96 board meeting in Orlando. Photo by Joel Jackson.

mental in the FTGA's hiring of a water consulting firm in response to growing pressure for new regulations on water use and allocation.

He encourages all superintendents to get involved in the industry by serving on committees and boards or writing for publications. Tom is now the editor of the Florida Turf Digest for the FTGA.

Tom misses the early mornings on the golf course and the fellowship with other superintendents, but he enjoys his new career. His innate sense for forward thinking sees pesticide usage declining in the future and the use of biologicals more widely accepted.

Tom lives in Hobe Sound, Florida with his wife Debbie and his fifteen year old son, Joshua. Joshua went to work for

another legend, Dick Grey at the new Florida Club this summer. While his son may not follow his father, he is learning about hard work while growing in a golf course.

Tom feels that Hobe Sound is "just right" and hates to see anymore growth. Like most superintendents, he is concerned about the environmental impacts for future Florida growth and he advocates slow managed growth.

As a fellow FGCSA Board member during Tom Benefield's presidency, I saw first hand his dedication to the association, the Florida Green and the industry. This dedication continues today. I feel that the FTGA is very fortunate to have Tom on their team. His involvement helps us all!

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# Daniel Zelazek: Portrait of a Master

BY DAVID BAILEY, CGCS

The hallmark of The Florida Green for years has been the cover photography. How can a small state magazine have the best covers in the golf business?

The source of this success is Daniel Zelazek. He is a professional industrial photographer for Pratt and Whitney, located in West Palm Beach. His assignments include jet engines, space shuttle fuel pumps and other high tech devices. For several years he has been working exclusively in digital photography. He is now using a camera valued at \$30,000.

Weekend golf photo sessions reveal the true Daniel Zelazek. His love for the outdoors and golf was established in his youth, as he followed his early sports heroes — Sam Snead, Gary Player and Ben Hogan. When his family moved from Connecticut to North Palm Beach in the mid 1960s, Zelazek started caddying at PGA National Golf Club. He enjoyed the courses so much he worked on the maintenance staff there for six summers during high school and college. Zelazek and Fred Klauk were high school golf teammates and college roommates. Upon graduation from the University of Florida, he took six months to travel the United States and determined photography would be his future career. Zelazek then attended the famous Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, California. Influenced by his exposure to the American west landscape, he admired the art of Brett Weston and Ansel Adams. It was only natural that Zelazek's early efforts were black and white landscapes. His black and white prints have appeared in gallery and university museums from coast to coast and in Europe, winning

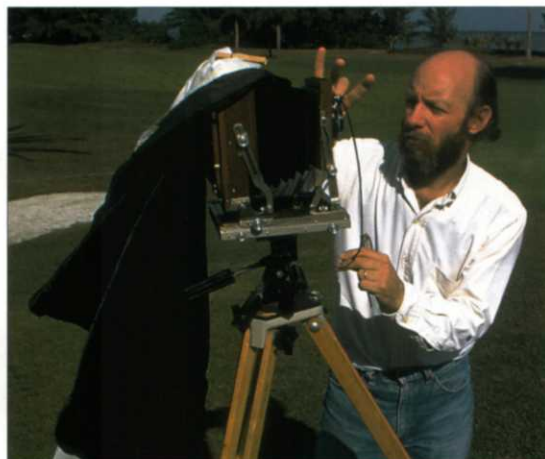
numerous awards. After three years in the West, Zelazek returned to Florida for his current position.

In 1981, after years of career commitment and not playing golf at all, the opportunity opened for a new cover photographer. Zelazek said, "This enabled me to return to golf, enjoy the sport and start playing again. It has always been a pleasure working with the superintendents."

Zelazek is an extreme perfectionist on any project in which he gets involved. The cover photography quality is a direct reflection of his lifelong commitment to excellence. Using only large format equipment, the 5" x 7" film sheet supplies the detail Zelazek demands for a two-page cover.

So always save your Florida Green magazines. Some day the covers will be collector's items!

*Editor's Note: Nothing gets me fired up more for a cover story visit than to hear the excitement in Daniel's voice when he describes his photo shoots. He brings an artist's eye, a craftsman's touch and a golfer's appreciation to each assignment. We are indeed fortunate to have such a fine talent working for the Florida Green. Thank you, Daniel!*



Nothing automatic about this camera! Daniel adjusts the settings on his 1979 custom made 5 x 7 Deardorff Wooden View Camera. Photo by David Bailey.



Daniel is used to working from loader buckets and forklifts, so this high reach at the Gasparilla Inn was an unexpected bonus. Photo by David Bailey.



All bundled up on a frosty morning, Daniel awaits the first rays of sunshine at Marsh Landing to capture what turned out to be a very dramatic cover shot for the Spring '96 issue. Photo by David Bailey.



# The 20th Annual Crowfoot Open



Paul Crawford (right) received the 1996 FGCSA Distinguished Service Award at the Crowfoot Open banquet after surviving a good natured "roasting" introduction from his long time friend, Butch Gill. Photo by Joel Jackson.

BY JOE ONDO, CGCS

Walt Disney World was host to Central Florida's Golf Course Superintendents' 20th Annual Crowfoot Open.

At the State Board Meeting on Saturday a new Executive Board was elected to a one-year term. New officers are Dale Kuehner, CGCS, President; Joe Ondo, CGCS, Vice President; and Mike Perham, CGCS, Secretary-Treasurer. Greg Plotner, CGCS will serve one more year on the Board as Past President. A new budget and new list of goals and objectives were approved for the 1996-97 fiscal year in hopes of continuing to make our association better for our members.

At the Sunday night banquet comedian/musician Dan Riley kept the audience in stitches with his routines and Mickey and Minnie Mouse were on hand for photo opportunities. Paul Crawford was presented with the FGCSA Distinguished Service Award for 1996 and well roasted in the process by Butch Gill. Clem

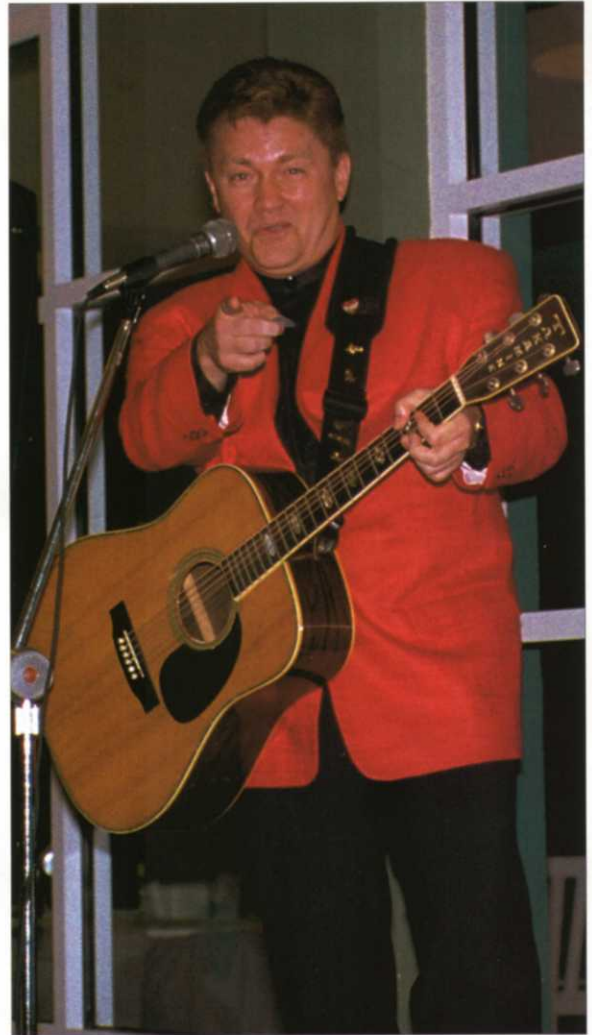


The 1996-97 FGCSA Officers elected at the Summer '96 board meeting in Orlando are from left: Secretary/Treasurer Michael Perham, CGCS; Vice President Joe Ondo, CGCS and President Dale Kuehner, CGCS. Greg Plotner, CGCS, remains on the board as immediate Past President. Photo by Joel Jackson.

(From the left) Richard Coyle and Dale Mitchell of Golf Agronomics present a \$5,500 donation from their rebate program to the FGCSA Research Fund. Over the past six years their donations have totaled over \$24,000. Immediate Past President, Greg Plotner, CGCS accepts the donation for the FGCSA. Photo by Joel Jackson.







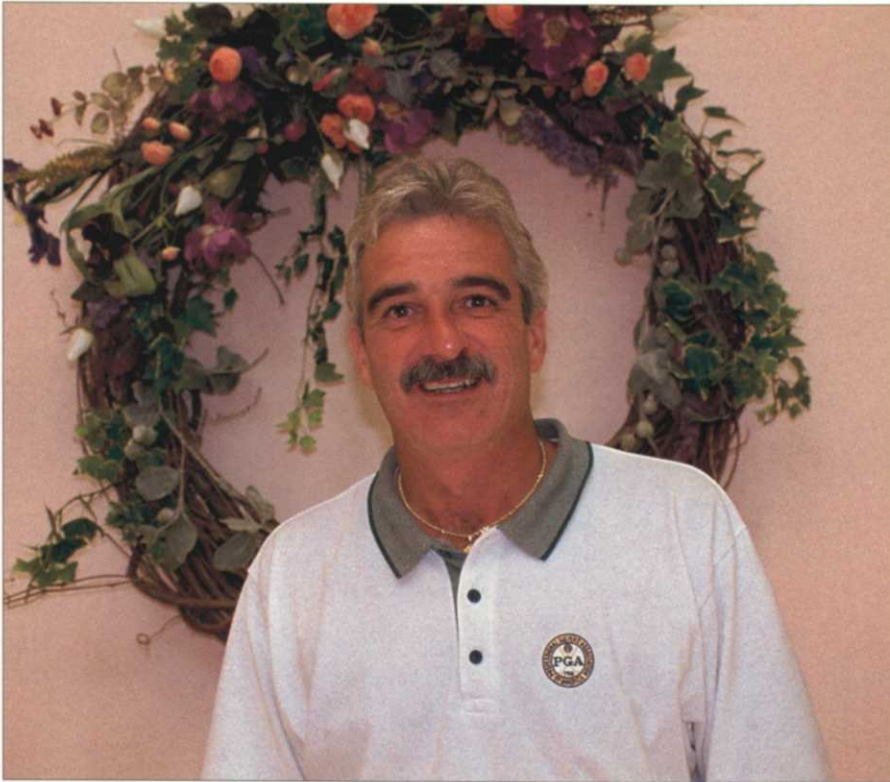
Singer-comedian Dan Riley kept the Crowfoot Open banquet crowd in stitches with his humorous and sometimes irreverent takeoffs on popular songs. Photo by Joel Jackson.

There's a lot being written about First Ladies these days. Central Florida has a clear favorite, Vilma Kamphaus, First Lady of the Crowfoot Open. Superintendent hubby, Larry Kamphaus may be the Chairman of the Crowfoot Committee, but we know who really does all the work. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Your hosts for the 20th Annual Crowfoot Open weekend were from left to right. Front row: Tom Trammel(MetroWest); Kevin Rotti(Eastwood & President, Central Florida Chapter); Tom Alex(Grand Cypress) and Dwight Kummer(Bay Hill). Back row: Larry Kamphaus(Walt Disney World) and Joe Ondo(Winter Pines). Photo by Joel Jackson.







The Low Gross winner of the Commercial Division was Steve O'Neill, a member of the North Florida PGA. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Stewart and Steve Kuhn were announced as 1996 recipients of the President's Award for Lifetime Service.

On Monday morning Joel Jackson, CGCS and his staff had everything ready for an 8:00 shotgun start for approximately 120 superintendents, sponsors and guests. Using the Stableford scoring system (with 1 point for a bogey, 2 points for par, 3 points for a birdie and 4 points for an eagle) play seemed to move at a better



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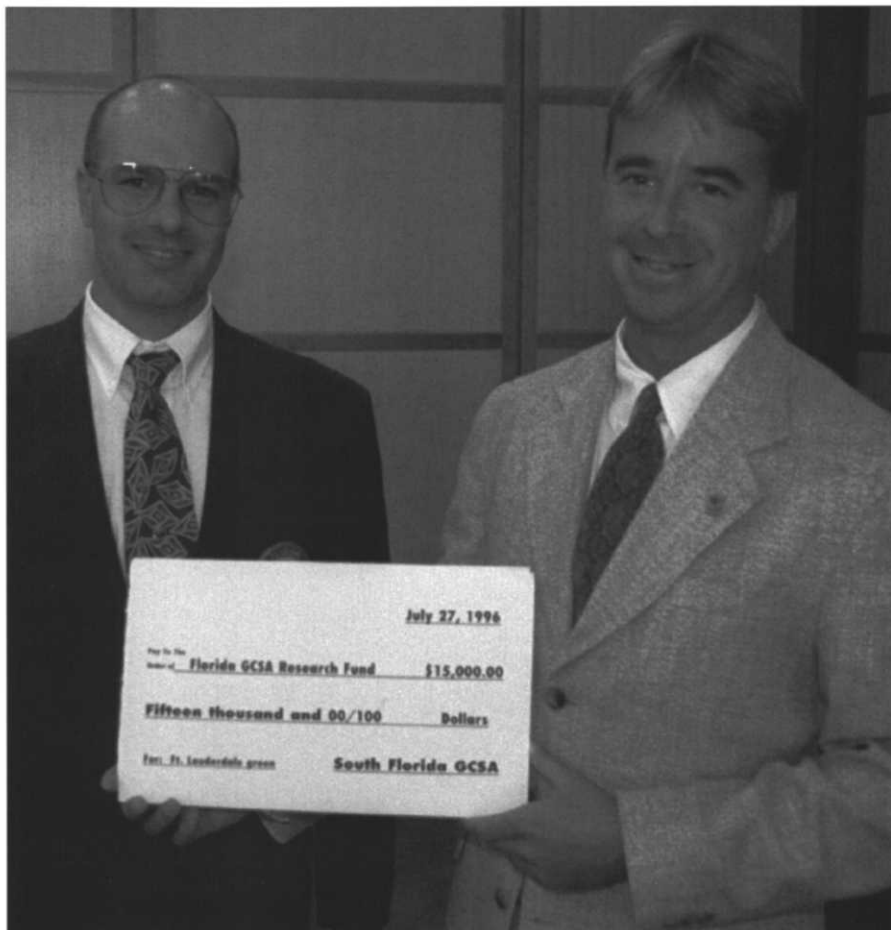
## SPOTLIGHT

pace this year. In less than five hours, it was time for a check of scorecards. Chapter team competition was as close as ever, with Seven Rivers winning a match of cards over Central Florida and Treasure Coast one shot back. Members of the winning team were Vic Conigliaro, Stuart Bozeman, Dennis Kuestes and Bob Roessing.

In individual competition, Vic Conigliaro shot a fine 72 to qualify for the state team, along with Mark Hopkins who qualified earlier this year. Finishing second was Mark Henderson in a match of cards over Larry Livingston, CGCS. In the net division Dennis Kuestes was first, Jay Gratton second and Stuart Bozeman third. In the commercial division Steve O'Neill was low gross winner with Steve Sorrel second and Mike Cook third. In the net division the winner was Kent Busser, followed by Chip Lewison and Harry Becker.

Congratulations to Harry Becker for his first career hole-in-one on the 3rd hole and winning closets to the pin prize on that hole. Other CTP winners were #6 Roy Wilshire, #12 Dave Oliver, #15 Keith Longshore, and long drive #8 Mark Hopkins.

A special thanks to Walt Disney World, Bonnet Creek Club, Joel Jackson, CGCS and his staff, Larry and Vilma Kamphaus and the Crowfoot Committee, and all our Gold and Diamond Sponsors for another successful event.



*Another successful South Florida Expo was celebrated as Bob Klitz, CGCS(right), South Florida External VP presented a \$15,000 check to incoming FGCSA President Dale Kuehner, CGCS. These Expo funds annually are the cornerstone for supporting the operation of the Otto Schmeisser Research Green in Ft. Lauderdale.  
Photo by Joel Jackson.*



*Anchored by Low Gross Superintendent winner Vic Conigliaro's par 72 and Net Division finishes of first and third by Bob Roessing and Stuart Bozeman, the Seven Rivers Chapter captured the Crowfoot Open Team Championship.(left to right) Vic Conigliaro, Dennis Kuestes, Bob Roessing and Stuart Bozeman. Photo by Joel Jackson.*