



Joe Konwinski 1915-2002

The Will Rogers of Turfgrass

by Mark Jarrell

Joe Konwinski, one of the Florida Turfgrass Association's founding fathers and its first president in 1952, passed away Aug. 17. He was 87 years young. This master of one-liners quipped to one of the last friends to visit him at the hospital, "Get me out of here - this place is full of old people!"

Joe never met anyone he didn't like, and the overflowing crowd at his funeral was testament to the inestimable number of people who were touched by this perpetually smiling, gracious, and witty human dynamo of service to others. Some, like Ralph White, Mike McLaughlin, Gerry Millholen, and Alan Puckett - all past-presidents of the FTGA - drove many hours to pay their final respects to their dear friend who was an icon of the golf and turf industry. Joe said in 1983, shortly after then-Lake Worth Mayor Betty Cortese declared June 18 "Joe Konwinski Day," that he wanted it to be remembered "that sometime in life I've helped someone like they've helped

me." One wonders if he had any idea how well he succeeded.

The headlines of his lengthy obituary columns in the two local newspapers read "Goodwill Ambassador Dead At 87," and "Joe Konwinski, 87, promoter of Lake Worth, avid volunteer." His passing rated a front-page photo in the *Greenacres Observer*. Joe's memorial folder featured a photo of him receiving an award from former Lake Worth Mayor Tom Ramiccio and Gov. Jeb Bush. While the golf and turf industry for many years has embraced him as an invaluable envoy, promoter, and activist, only upon his passing do we learn the depth, range, and diversity of Joe's service to others.

Joe volunteered his time to the Special Olympics, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Salvation Army, and the American Heart Association. He served on the Palm Beach Community College Beautification Committee, the John F. Kennedy Hospital Development Council, and the Lake Worth High School Advisory Board. He was club

secretary for the Rotary Club of Lake Worth for 43 years, on the board of the Palm Beach Habilitation Center for 31 years, master of ceremonies for the Lake Worth Chamber of Commerce monthly breakfast meetings for 20 years, and founder of the American-Polish Club of Lake Worth, serving as its president for 17 years. When he returned home each summer to Iron River, Mich., he would promote Lake Worth and South Florida as a guest on a radio show.

Joe entered the turf world in 1946 after leaving the U.S. Army Air Corps, where he served four years as a glider pilot throughout World War II at 21 different bases. He was the superintendent of the Lake Worth Municipal Golf Course from 1946 to 1958, worked for Ousley Sod Co. from 1962 to 1974, and consulted at more than 100 golf courses, resorts, and sports fields throughout his career. He taught a turfgrass management course at Palm Beach Community College for more than 20 years. He officiated at numerous industry functions as a speaker, an emcee, and an installer of officers. He

was friend and mentor to many young turf neophytes who have gone on to become successful golf course superintendents and sports field managers. It was hoped by all of us who knew and loved him that he would be the special honoree at the FTGA's 50th anniversary celebration in September.

We all remember Joe's infectious grin, positive attitude, and eternal optimism; his one-liners, funny stories, and ability to get a hug from every woman in the room. We all have our special stories and memories of this beloved gentleman. I will always remember the years I helped Joe with his booth promoting the turfgrass industry at Lake Worth High School's annual Career Day. We always had a large baking pan on which I placed a slab of putting green turf and a miniature soccer goal that Joe felt grabbed the kids' attention and drew them to our booth. He also liked placing pie tins of various colored fertilizers (like the blue Nitroform) to gain notice, and got such a kick out of telling the kids to bend over and smell this very fragrant material called Milorganite. We both were amazed at the number of students who knew ammonium nitrate could be used to make bombs, but had no clue it was a plant fertilizer.

Joe leaves behind four generations of relatives, including a brother, daughter-in-law, and numerous grieving nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. His beloved wife Lucy, 1994, and son Joey, 1977, preceded him in death. His service was Aug. 27 at E. Earl Smith & Son Funeral Home in Lake Worth, and he was interred at Pinecrest Cemetery. Numerous and various means of honoring his memory have been suggested and are in the works.

On the last page of Joe's memorial folder was a poem so apropos of this remarkable man and the life he led:

*Goodbye Is Not Forever
When you lived your life for others
and you loved without condition
When you made so many laugh
and your smile won't be forgotten
When you left behind an empty place
that no one else can fill
When the friendships that you shared
long to be renewed
When you built your life on hope
and fulfilled it every day
The footprints that you left behind
will bring us face to face
So, goodbye is not forever,
you're only steps away*

AS IT LIES

All Aboard!

The rebate on this ticket is bigger than the cost

Many songs have been written about trains. The list of titles and authors would fill pages. Until 40 years ago, they were a main source of transportation in this country. To all



of us old-timers, who actually rode on trains and may have had a Lionel model set up at Christmas, trains held or still hold a wonderful mystique.

By Jim Walker

Sadly, trains in this country do not still run as successfully as they do in Europe. On the Continent, it is faster to ride the train than to fly in a lot of cases, given that airports are so far out of the city and many travelers' destinations are in the city.

I still get goose bumps when I watch an old movie and the conductor leans out from the passenger steps, waves his lantern or flashlight and bellows those famous words: "All Aboard!" So much for the nostalgia, now on to the heart of the matter: Why you should get aboard and join your local chapter's board of directors.

For me, it took 16 years of slopping at the trough until the guilt became so intense that I realized the time had come for me to give something back for all those years of meeting, eating, and playing golf.

I will never forget my first board meeting. It was at Sunrise Country Club where Machine Gun Al Ross hung his hat. From that first meeting I have never been sorry for stepping up and getting on the train. People like Bill McKee and Dale Kuehner made me feel at home and I was comforted in the fact that they were glad to have me involved.

There they were some of the movers and shakers of our chapter, and all nice guys when you got to know them. In the beginning, the part of the meeting I enjoyed most was after, when everyone would go to dinner and shoot the bull about work. I learned so much at those dinners, whether sitting and listening or ask-

ing questions. The sharing of knowledge and hearing about other people's problems and solutions has been a wealth of information for me.

My years on the board were very satisfying and sometimes quite trying. We had a run of bad luck for a few years with new people coming on the board and then leaving for various reasons; sadly for some who had lost their job and happy for others who had gotten new and better jobs out of our chapter, and some who just could not follow through on their commitment.

I have made some wonderful friends I would otherwise not have made were it not for my involvement. I can honestly say that everyone with whom I served was a nice guy or gal and I would not have missed it for the world.

Do yourself a favor. Get on board. Make some new friends. Make other friendships grow even stronger. Learn and teach. Enjoy good food and good friends. You will not be sorry.

"ALL ABOARD!"

P.S. Getting to know and work with work with our association

manager, Marie Roberts was definitely a high point of my years on the board. What a wonderful and professional lady she is. Kudos to my special friend in Stuart. The other high point of my years on the board was getting to work with my wife Susi for several years. How many guys do you know whose wife is a superintendent? Baby, you're the greatest!

For information about the author, see inside cover.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Economic Study

For years our association and industry have done many good

things for the state in terms of providing quality recreation, positive economic impact and improved environmental management. Over ten years ago when I was on the board, we complained that we did all of that good but no one in the government knew what we were doing. Last year we finally got a great chance to tell our story.

Professors Alan Hodges, Ph.D. and John Haydu, Ph.D. authored the "Economic Impacts of the Florida Golf Course Industry." It was partially funded by the FGCSA as well as the FTGA, EGCSA, WCI, Taylor Woodrow, Bonita Bay Group and the Florida Golf Alliance. The report relied on input from all Florida golf courses. Sadly only 17 percent of the state's courses responded. That's 223 responses out of 1,334 golf courses that were contacted.

I know that we all receive too much junk mail and probably too many magazines but the envelopes were standard IFAS/U of F and I received at least two of them, probably three. Shame on all of you who blew off our best

chance ever to tell our story to the Legislature, the media and the public. If a thousand of us could have taken 20 minutes of our precious time to complete the survey, we would have had a more unified response and really show the Legislature that we are a serious and committed group.

Scott Bell

Past President 1994-95

Golf Course Manager - Red Stick Golf Club

Scott, while I share your frustration at the apparent indifference of so many courses to participate in a meaningful exercise to show that unity factor, Dr. Haydu assures me that the data collected was detailed enough to achieve verifiable results.

Many will prosper because of the efforts of the few, but then that's nothing new in our industry.

Containment Barrier

Over the past year we have discovered a problem with USGA & modified sand-based greens. The black plastic containment barrier in low and runoff areas



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2001 FLORIDA GREEN PHOTO CONTEST

The winners of the 2002 contest will be published in a four part series beginning with this issue. Contest rules and guidelines for the 2003 contest will be in the Winter 2003 issue.

The 2002 winners combined sharp photography, color and mood

to capture top spots from the panel of judges. Enjoy the efforts of this year's contestants.

Category 4 Scenic Hole - includes sunrises, sunsets, frosts, storms or any other interesting view of a golf hole.



Editor's Choice - Sunrise on #10 Green by Tom Biggy, Bent Tree C.C.



First Place - Reflections on a Par 3 by Neil Cleverly, The Old Colliers G.C.



Second Place - Audubon C.C. by Jason DiMartino.

in the front or sides of greens tends to promote excess water retention inside the barrier at 1 to 2 inch depths. Our research has shown the high water retention created by the containment barrier provides an ideal environment for algae and anaerobic soils (black layer) and significantly increases the risk for turf loss.

Possible solutions:

1. Remove approximately 6 to 8 inches of the containment barrier to a depth of 6 inches.
2. Remove the entire barrier in the front or side of the greens where runoff is evident.
3. Install a smile drain inside the green's cavity, cut a hole in the barrier and extend the pipe well outside the cavity.

*Matt Pulis, MS, International Sports Turf Research Conference Agronomist
Nat Hubbard, Field Representative*

Gentlemen, thank you for sharing your observations and remedies.

Birdies, Bogeys and a Couple of Pars

In GCSAA seminars, like "Managing Your Employees for Peak Performance" and "Team Building," we have learned the importance and necessity for recognition and reward for good performance and guidance

GREEN SIDE UP



Joel Jackson, CGCS

and feedback for poor performance. So in that spirit, I give you my 2002 Birdie and Bogy awards to recognize the over and under achievers of the year. If the score

fits, write it down, figure your handicap and practice to do better next time.

Par:

EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman scores a par. She gets a

birdie for actually playing golf, but also a bogey for challenging golf to do better in non-point source pollution. Read the 20 years of research, Ms. Whitman, and quit listening to your staff who thinks EPA means Eliminate Pesticides ASAP.

Birdies to those staff members at FDOACS, FDEP, the water management districts and yes, even U.S. EPA, who are willing to listen and work with real-world data.

Bogeys to those at the same agencies who use assumptions, computer models and politics to make important decisions.

Birdies to the chemical and fertilizer manufacturers who diligently work on making safer more efficient products.

Bogeys to companies who make and market snake oil.

Birdies to superintendent associations and developers who work with government agencies for fair and reasonable rules and regulations on golf's behalf.

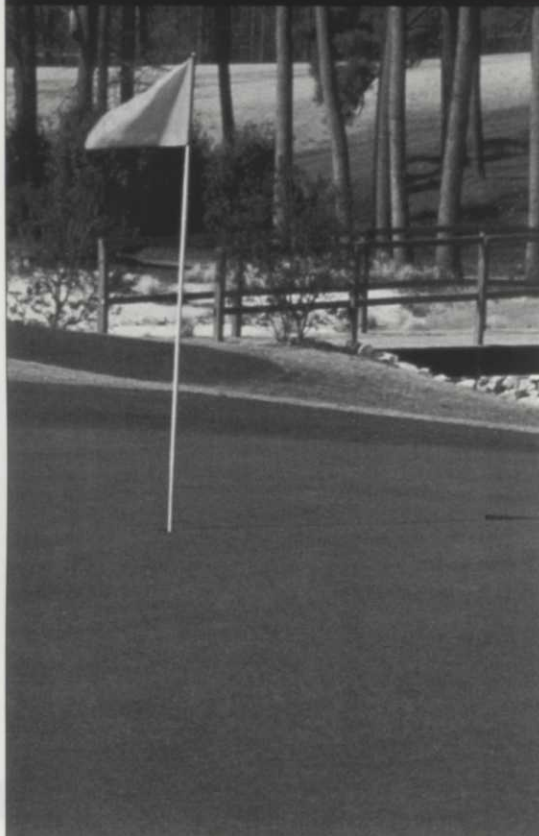
Bogeys to golf course owners and developers who take but never give. See below.

Birdies to the 270 courses who responded to the UF/IFAS survey on the Economic Impact of Florida's Golf Industry. Thanks to you we have quality data for making a case for funds and reasonable regulations.

Triple Bogy to the 1,000-plus golf courses who failed inexcusably to make a simple but profound impact and contribution to the industry that supports their very existence. Hang your heads in shame.

Birdies: To all the vendors and suppliers around the state who continue to support our associations. We love you man!

Bogeys: To the Florida Legislature for cutting the IFAS budget. Even North Carolina, with a turf-grass industry economic impact one-quarter of Florida's, budgets \$650,000 annually for turf research and education to NC State. Note to IFAS lobby-



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Birdies to the owners, general managers, club managers, golf professionals, club presidents, green chairmen and club members who get it that Mother Nature rules. They respect and work with their superintendents to create healthy turf and good playing conditions.

ists in Tallahassee. The number in Florida is \$4.4 billion in golf revenue

Birdies to the Golf and the Environment organizers for bringing activist groups and golf to the table.

Bogeys to the high-powered, most influential golf associations for not showing up. Can you say PGA?

Arnie scores a par. He gets a birdie for admitting at the Golf and Environment summit that his dad relied on arsenate of lead in the old days. Yes, we have come a long way baby! But he gets a bogey for saying the word arsenic near an activist group. Say goodbye to MSMA.

Birdies: To the 59 certified ACSP golf courses in Florida.

Pars: To the 234 uncertified ACSP member courses.

Bogeys: To the 1,000-plus courses that are not members.

Double Bogeys: To those who don't even know what ACSP stands for?

Birdie: To Geoff Coggan for visiting 11 of the 12 chapters during his term as FGCSA president.

Birdies: To Alan Puckett and Bobby Ellis for beginning to take the FTGA message on the road.

Bogeys: To chapter education dhairmen who can't find a speaker for the monthly meeting. See hints above. The number at IFAS is 352-392-1831 and GCSAA is 800-472-7878. They're free too!

Birdies to the 10-12 clubs in each chapter that host meetings, some every year.

Bogeys to the hundreds of clubs in each chapter that don't volunteer to host a meeting - ever!

Birdies to those who serve as officers, directors, committee members, and chapter administrators.

Bogeys to those who never volunteer for anything. Keep those checks coming anyhow! We need your money for turf research, continuing education, benevolent funds, and government relations.

Birdie to the *Orlando Sentinel* for their series on water issues in Florida. It was pretty balanced for a change.

Bogeys to those papers like the *Tampa Tribune*, *Sarasota Herald Tribune* and *Palm Beach Post*, who don't print all the facts, don't research the facts or don't know the difference between fact and fiction.

Birdies to Hootie Johnson and the members at Augusta. This is America. It's their club. It's private. Besides over 1,000 golf rounds were played by women at Augusta last year. There are many men-only clubs that don't allow women on the course. But they don't have the media attention that Augusta does. God loves a misguided activist.

Bogeys to Martha Burk and the National Council of Women's Organizations. Good cause. Wrong target. Wrong methods. Just plain wrong.

Birdies to the owners, general managers, club managers, golf professionals, club presidents, green chairmen and club members who get it that Mother Nature rules. They respect and work with their superintendents to create healthy turf and good playing conditions.

Bogeys to the egomaniacs and arrogant dictators in those same positions who can't see past today's stimpeter readings. They create revolving doors and merry-go-rounds and they give their courses bad reputations. The world knows who you are.

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