

Gentleman Joe Lee

MARK MY WORDS

To borrow a "Joe Lee-ism," if I were any happier, I'd be twins! On Nov. 2, Joe and Jinny Lee hosted a book-signing dinner party at Palm Beach National for the long-awaited and much-anticipated introduction of "Gentleman Joe Lee", a book about the life and architecture of a man I've known, loved, and respected for over



Mark Jarrell, CGCS

30 years. Our small clubhouse was filled to overflowing with people who feel the same way about this remarkable talent and exemplary human being.

Many admirers, including me, have always felt Mr. Lee has not been given proper recognition for his contributions to the game of golf, and this book will help present and preserve his philosophy and life story in the chronicles of golf history.

The book is just the right size for a cover-to-cover reading in a few hours - 242 pages of beautiful photography by Theresa Airey and flowing text by *Golf Digest* and *Golf World's* Ron Whitten - but you'll find yourself picking it up again and again to digest a seemingly simple design principle or to peruse a beautiful photo of a hole you've played or would like to play. It's a simple and straightforward examination of Joe's life, work, and philosophy without the aggrandizement you'd normally get, given the level of tal-



Joe Lee, center; on the job during the reconstruction of the Banyan Golf Club in 1998. Show here with superintendent Clint Smallridge, CGCS, left and his assistant, Tim Enoch.

ent and accomplishment of the subject. Ego and self-promotion are not in Joe Lee's vocabulary, and would not be permitted in a book about him, no matter how well deserved or adamant his admirers. I'm quite sure the book's title was not so much chosen as it was preordained.

Golf course designer Joseph L. Lee has quietly put up

astounding numbers: 50 years as a designer; approximately 250 original designs; about 500 total projects worked on. If this were baseball, Joe Lee would be a combination of Cal Ripken, Roger Clemens, and Sammy Sosa. Many of the creations credited to Dick Wilson, especially in the later years of his life, are Joe Lee's work from top to bottom, but gentleman Joe would never accept

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Joe Lee, left, with Ron Whitten, senior editor of architecture for *Golf Digest* and *Golf World* magazines and author of "Gentleman Joe Lee, 50 Years of Golf Design" at Lee's book-signing dinner at Palm Beach National GC in November.

An Original Poem

This is an original poem composed by Clint Smallridge, CGCS, Banyan Golf Club, longtime friend and admirer of Mr. Lee. Clint wrote it especially for Joe and read it to the assemblage at the dinner party.

Mr. Joe Lee, A Man Among Men
*Oh what a joy it has been
To spend a career with such a good friend*

In the Bahamas with just rocks and trees

You had the answer, get soil from the sea

*The stories you tell are funny indeed
But contained within there is a lesson to heed*

You always set the standard, a lofty goal indeed

I knew you were watching, that is why I had to succeed

When you came to visit at Mullet Bay

Again you had the answer, move that hotel out of our way

With Mrs. Jinny and Betty at your side

You weave beauty and wonder over the country wide

Golf is your business but people your passion

Relationships, friendships, business deals all around the world to fashion

You once told me "Always give the other guy a chance to be a gentleman"

But it was you my friend that extended the helping hand

So it's time for special wishes, and only the best will do

For when it comes to special friends, the very best is you!

Clint Smallridge, CGCS

such recognition if it meant taking credit from the man who mentored him and launched him into a career he's enjoyed so well these many years.

With more than 100 golf courses in Florida, these comments are not news to the many players who have enjoyed his creations, or to the many superintendents in this state who have had the pleasure of working with and getting to know this extraordinary man.

A quote from his book, "One of the jobs of the chairman of the green committee is to defend what the superintendent is doing," best illustrates why Mr. Lee is so respected and beloved by superintendents. Joe has always supported and respected the work of the golf course superintendent, understanding the difficulties of a job fraught with so many uncontrollable factors.

He once said that had he not had the great fortune of success as a golf course designer, he might have enjoyed the profession of golf course superintendent. How many other golf course architects have had a surprise dinner party given in their honor by devoted and appreciative golf course superintendents, as Joe Lee did in 1990 at Pine Tree Country Club?

Joe's book is not for sale. He and Jinny decided to underwrite the entire cost of publication, but they are requesting a \$50-per-book donation to the Joe Lee Scholarship Foundation, Inc., which annually awards scholarships to the children of employees (or the employees themselves) at Joe Lee-designed golf courses. Requests for books, information about the scholarship fund, or donations, can be directed to P.O. Box 1270, Boynton Beach, FL 33425, or call 561-732-2421 or 561-732-5518. Several pro shops have already received books, and more are scheduled, so you might find one at your nearest Joe Lee golf course.

The recent HBO miniseries, "Band of Brothers" swept the consciousness of the current generation as the story of the tremendous human sacrifice by this band of World War II citizen-soldiers was

that we fulfill our managerial mission requirements.

And in our campaign, we too suffer losses. In 2002 our senses have been assaulted by the loss of no less than seven of our comrades-in-arms: Chuck Almony, Jr., Bill Cowing, Tom Crawford, Chip Fowkes, Joe Konwinski, Mike Cantwell and the last brother to leave us on Dec. 6, Jeff Hayden. Each was known to us in different ways as a class-

Our Own Band of Brothers

GREEN SIDE UP



Joel Jackson, CGCS

told. The miniseries was based on the book by Stephen Ambrose, who chronicled the lives and battles of the members of Easy Company, 506th Regiment of the 101st Airborne. The show earned Golden Globe and Emmy Awards for the Best Miniseries in 2002. It is a tale of how common men performed uncommon acts of bravery and valor. It is a story of how a diverse cross section of personalities became one of the most highly trained and efficient units in military history.

We learned the hopes and fears and strengths and weakness of each of the true-life characters as they made their way from their training camp in Toccoa, Ga. to the fall of the Third Reich in Germany. Along the way, life happened. Choices they made enriched or ended their lives. They bled and died for a noble cause, but in the end more for each other; and they would never be the same.

Brothers, born in combat, they would watch their family numbers shrink after each engagement; the losses taking their emotional toll, making each man question his purpose and his future.

Our modern-day sacrifices are not so grave, but superintendents have a common bond making us a Band of Brothers in many respects. We face so many common challenges in terms of growing and grooming golf's playing surfaces that we share many of the same emotions and stresses associated with the business. We have all had to make a commitment of time and effort to ensure

mate, mentor, leader, friend, contributor, volunteer, associate, buddy, pal and peer. Their spheres of influence range from local to state and national in nature and each was just as important in its own context as their lives interacted with ours in common concerns and achievements.

The title, "Band of Brothers" came from Shakespeare's play *Henry the Fifth*. In honor of our fallen comrades I share with you an edited version of the passage which gave rise to the title:

*He which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made...*

We would not die in that man's company...

But he that outlives that day shall see old age...

And strip his sleeve and show his scars...

And say, "These wounds I had on Crispin's Day."

...This story shall the good man teach his son;

*And Crispin's Day shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,*

*But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;*

For he today who sheds his blood with me

Shall be my brother..."

Though our daily battles are far less rigorous than those heroes of another age, they are no less a measure of our abilities and our loyalties. In that regard, we owe it to each other to be prepared, to be competent, to be diligent and to make sacrifices so that our unique profession lives on in honor. We few, we happy few, we band of brothers. For those whose paths I followed and for those who have walked in my footsteps, living and gone - they are my brothers forever.