

Meet the President

By Joel Jackson

Thirty-four years after getting into golf course maintenance, Gary Myers, CGCS is the Manager of Golf Course Maintenance Operations of Walt Disney World Company and the President of the Florida GCSA. Neither role is new to Myers as he also served as Regional Director of Golf Course Maintenance Operations for the Tournament Players Clubs and is a past president of the Southern Nevada GCSA.

Originally from Anderson, Ind., Myers attended Purdue University majoring in mechanical engineering, but ended up getting his Turf Management certificate from the University of Massachusetts. He began his golf maintenance career in 1976 on the crew at Arthur Pack Regional Park & Golf Course in Tucson, Ariz. He loved the work and the superintendent and assistant at the course both had graduated from UMass and they talked Myers into getting his golf management education there.

From 1978 to 1996 Gary progressed from an assistant superintendent position at Tucson National GC, to a series of

superintendent positions at CC of Green Valley, AZ (79-82); Desert Inn Hotel & CC, Las Vegas (82-89); TPC Summerlin, Las Vegas (89-94) and the Tournament Players Club in Scottsdale, AZ (94-96) before coming to Disney World.

Disney Golf Operations covers 81 holes: The Magnolia, Palm, Lake Buena Vista and Osprey Ridge 18-hole courses and the nine-hole Oak Trail walking course adjacent to the Magnolia.

Since December 1971 – barely two months after the opening of Walt Disney World Resort – the PGA Tour has been making an annual visit to the popular vacation destination. But for the Tour and some of the world's greatest golfers, the visit has had a serious side: a late-season tournament that has sometimes decided money titles, scoring championships and the makeup of the following year's all-exempt Tour.

It started out as a typical individual event, but after a few years it changed to a two-man team event, and eventually reverted to an important season-ending event for those Tour exemptions. Currently known as the Children's Miracle



Gary Myers, CGCS, President

Network Classic, the tournament has a list of champions that includes Jack Nicklaus (three times) and Tiger Woods (twice).

Myers mentions a couple of mentors who were instrumental in helping him develop his career.

“Steve Talkington, a former Scott’s salesman, encouraged me to apply for the Desert Inn job,” he said. “I thought I might be too young and lack the necessary experience to move up to such a higher-profile facility. Without his advice and help I’m not sure where I would be today.

“George Jaramillo, former owner of Las



Third hole, Disney's Palm Course, one of the courses involved in PGA tournament play since 1971. Photo courtesy of Walt Disney World.

Vegas Fertilizer, was another individual for whom I have so much respect. He gave me advice on how to handle myself personally and professionally, which I have never forgotten.”

Myers advises prospective or young superintendents to “be professional in the way you approach your job and that also includes the way you dress. In this often challenging profession, Change is another opportunity to succeed! Keep your emotion with regard to work steady. Try not to get too high when conditions are good and don’t get too low when conditions aren’t so great.”

His personal goal is “to be a good father, husband and friend. Also to be a good son, but like many of us we don’t see that as a priority until we get older.

“Other than family moments, the



Allied association representatives met in Orlando in July. Panelists, from left: John Reger, Jr, PGA of America; Martha Mazzitelli, Hospitality Financial & Technology Professionals; Art Kinkle, Florida CMAA president; Susan Wegrzyn, National Club Association, Pete Snyder, executive director FTGA and Gary Myers, CGCS, president FGCSA. Photo courtesy of CMAA.

perhaps the most memorable for me was when my Pop Warner football team was playing a team from Jacksonville for the North Florida Championship. The game was tied in regulation 0-0. We scored in what is called a Kansas City Tie Breaker and, when we kept them from scoring, we won the game. It was the most exhilarating moment of my life other than close family moments. We went on to lose to Miami the following week.

“The second most memorable moment came the following year when we beat that same Miami team to advance to the Pop Warner Super Bowl. I enjoy spending time with my family more than anything, and I have been coaching Pop Warner Football for 12 years.”

Myers served on the boards and in all offices of the Southern

Nevada GCSA, the Central Florida GCSA and the FGCSA. He has served on local advisory boards and GCSAA committees to volunteer his time to the associations representing our profession. His most recent service came as he represented the FGCSA at the CMAA Golf Summit in Orlando in July. He summarizes the summit topics in his President’s Message in this issue.

Legendary greens and bunkers have one thing in common... they both began with the best soil.

Beneath every meticulously groomed green is dirt. And, the best dirt doesn’t just happen. At **Golf Agronomics Supply & Handling** we’ve been perfecting golf course soil and sand for more than a decade. Our computerized soil blending equipment ensures that the mix you receive meets your exacting specifications – every order, every time. With production facilities located throughout the Southeast, Golf Agronomics offers volume orders and next day service.

GOLF AGRONOMICS SUPPLY & HANDLING

Serving the Carolinas and Florida
800-626-1359 • FAX (941) 955-4690
www.golfag.com