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## PRESIDENTS AWARDS

# Chapters Honor Lifetime Service

## North Florida Chapter Says, 'Dwight Got It Right!'

In a career spanning 34 years so far, Dwight "Butch" Singo has been from Lake Placid to Jacksonville and a few stops in between. Singo began his career at the Sun 'N Lake Executive Golf Course in 1973 in Lake Placid. A few years later his company opened the Sun 'N Lake Resort of Sebring and Singo transferred to head up the new operation where he remained for four more years.

In 1979 Singo moved to Winter Springs to take over the Big Cypress Golf Club working with Dr. Harry Day. Big Cypress was originally the Devlin-Von Hagge course called Sheoah G.C.

Even in his early days Singo was volunteering and long before the Ridge Chapter was born, Singo commuted to the Orlando area to serve on the Central



*President Lon Chatfield proudly presents Dwight "Butch" Singo with a 2007 FGCSA President's Award for Lifetime Service at the chapter's annual meeting in Jacksonville for his 16 years of service to the North Florida GCSA.*

Florida GCSA Board of Directors beginning in 1975. Once in central Florida, Singo moved through the board and officer chairs to become chapter president in 1979.

In 1984 Singo went to work for Vigoro Industries. Who doesn't remember Par Ex products? Well maybe not the young whipper snappers. After nine years with Vigoro, Singo accepted a sales representative position with

Harrell's Inc. in 1993. He been there 14 years and Singo says he hopefully expects to retire from Harrell's.

Beside his tenure as an officer and board member of the Central Florida Chapter, Singo served on the Crowfoot Committee for approximately five years before becoming a commercial member and board member of the North Florida GCSA for the past 16 years. Singo has been handling chapter meeting

**Singo previously has been awarded the Larry Kamphaus and Jack Harrell Sr. Awards for Lifetime Service**

reservations for at least the past 12 years.

Singo's service has not gone unnoticed by his peers in the industry. In August 2005 he was given the Central Florida Crowfoot Open Larry Kamphaus Award; in December 2006 he was presented the Jack Harrell Sr. Lifetime Achievement Award; and this year the North Florida Chapter has presented him with the FGCSA President's Award for Lifetime Service.

A man's character and his actions tell the whole story. The quiet unassuming steady and dependable Butch Singo has been getting it right for a long time and his friends in the North Florida wanted to add their thanks and recognition for a job well done.

## Everglades Recognizes Durand's 4 Decades

*By Wayne Kappauf, CGCS*

On July 12, the Everglades GCSA held its annual meeting at Twin Eagles Country Club in

Naples. Long time FGCSA and Everglades member Steven Durand was given the FGCSA's Presidents Award for Lifetime Service.

Outgoing Everglades President Billy Davidson made the presentation and gave an emotional account of Durand's service to the industry and his own personal history with Steve.

Steve Durand has been

in the turf industry for over 30 years and has been a superintendent in four states and in four different decades. Originally from the Northeast,

Steve made his way to Florida in the 80's and never looked back.

Steve has experience from both sides of the superintendent's desk and is currently one of

**Now with Harrell's, Steve Durand has been a superintendent in four states over four different decades**

Harrell Fertilizer's top representatives. Prior to his Harrell's position, Steve was superintendent at Quail

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*At the EGCSA Annual Meeting President Billy Davidson (left) paid tribute to veteran superintendent Steve Durand in his remarks and presented him with a 2007 FGCSA President's Award for Lifetime Service.*

Creek Country Club in Naples for 13 years. During this period he served on the Everglades Board of Directors and is a past president of the chapter.

Steve's wife Vicki attended the meeting and was thrilled to see her husband so warmly received by nearly a hundred of his peers and friends.

Steven Durand has made his mark on the golf course industry and we all know he had a great time doing it.

From all of us who have known and worked with Steve over the years we say, "Thank you for your service and friendship and congratulations on receiving the 2007 FGCSA's Presidents Award."



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**Photo by Daniel Zelazek**





## KINGSWAY COUNTRY CLUB

# Turning a Challenge Into an Opportunity

*By Joel Jackson, CGCS*

It is just a little over two years ago that Hurricane Charlie took dead aim on Punta Gorda and roared up Charlotte Harbor, gathering strength from the shallow warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the bay just before it slammed into the mainland.

Kingsway CC is located about a mile east of I-75 in Lake Suzy, off Kings Highway in Desoto County and only a couple of miles from where the Peace River flows into the upper bay. Many members live

on the course, while others live in nearby communities like Punta Gorda, Port Charlotte, Arcadia, and North Port.

Superintendent Ryan Willis, CGCS says that Kingsway CC was on the western edge of the 20-mile-wide eye-wall of the storm as it roughly followed U.S. Highway 17 northward on its destructive path across Florida on Friday the 13th in August, 2005. Acting more like a large tornado, the storm destroyed the Kingsway clubhouse facilities and conservatively more than 2,000 large trees and many smaller ones

as well.

The day after the storm, Willis couldn't access the property. He came back the next day and made his way through the debris, fired up the front-end loader tractor and began clearing a path so people could get into the property to begin damage assessments and basic cleanup.

Those early days of shock and awe have finally been replaced by more normal operations on a newly redesigned and renovated golf course and clubhouse. Recovery, rebuilding and rejuvenation have

## SUPERINTENDENT FACTS

## Ryan Willis, CGCS

**From:** Born in Newport News, Va. Grew up in Port Charlotte

**Family:** Wife Catrina. Son Taylor (5) and daughter Morgan (2)

**Education:** B.S. in Turf Management, University of Florida, 1995

**Employment:** 2003-present, superintendent Kingsway C.C.; 2002-03 superintendent (IGM) World Woods; 1998-2002 superintendent (IGM) Tarpon Springs G.C.; 1997-98 superintendent (IGM) Poinciana G. & R.C.; 1996-97 assistant superintendent (IGM) Palm Aire Spa & Resort; 1995-96 crew Gainesville G&CC; 1994-95 staff UF Dept. of Soil & Water Science.



*Ryan Willis, CGCS. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

**Professional Affiliations:** 13-year member of GCSAA. Certified in 2004. FGCSA member and 3 years on Calusa GCSA Board. Immediate Past President

**How did you get into the business?** I went to UF to study architecture and building construction. After the initial classes I realized I didn't like being inside all day hunched over a drafting table. I explored other options and discovered turf management and working on golf courses. After a few turf classes I got a job doing research project sampling at the horticulture unit. Soon after that I started working for Jeff Hayden and Buddy Keene at Gainesville G&CC. Jeff was a very big factor in getting me into the the business.

**Work philosophy and advice:** Lead by example. Don't be afraid to get sweaty and dirty. Document or die.

**Immediate goals:** I want to get our Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program back up and running post hurricane recovery. We have been naturalizing areas and have a long-range plan to re-forest them.

**Memorable moments:** It has to be the birth of my children.

**Hobbies:** Golfing, fishing (I jumped my first tarpon recently. Pretty exciting) and the Gators.

become a way of life. The members and employees can never go back completely to the way things were, but they can take pride in a new facility, better designed and equipped to prosper in the future growth of southwest Florida.

Restoration of the golf course to its original condition was not really an option. The pine woods that the course had been carved from by architect Ron Garl in 1976 were gone forever. The club could not afford to plant large tree specimens and neither did it make sense to install thousands of small caliber trees that would take decades to restore the course to its original character and appearance.

It was time for the club to assess its resources and create a vision for the future. It was time for decisive action in order to make lemonade out of the lemon that Mother Nature had just handed the members. A group of members led by Rocky Farhat, long-time resident and die-hard Kingsway booster, contacted Garl about coming back to renovate and redesign one of his early golf courses. Farhat said Garl was visibly emotional as he assessed the damage and discussed possible improvements to the course. After all, Kingsway was one of his babies.

Anyone who takes pride in his work and has labored long and hard on a piece of land and left his or her mark on it will always be tied to that property. It comes with the job. We all move on. It's inevitable. But we always have soft spots in our hearts for those courses we built or maintained. Garl signed on and a new Kingsway began to rise from the jumble of shattered tree trunks and broken branches.

With no stands of trees to define the routing as before, Garl suggested that the committee consider adopting some design features of notable courses that also didn't have many trees. The original Pine Valley golf course came to mind, so the addition of waste areas planted with native grasses became part of the new look to replace some of the former wooded areas left barren by the storm. Other improvements