

Heart of America GCSA discovers recognition is attainable

The Heart of America Golf Course Superintendents Association two years ago embarked on an aggressive public relations program that has met with such gratifying success, its leaders plan to continue their efforts.

Dave Fearis of Blue Hills Country Club in Kansas City said that since the non-golfing community does not know who superintendents are, the Heart of America GCSA embarked on efforts that have already gained public acceptance and

support.

First, in 1990, it sponsored a Christmas tree in a community function called "The Festival of Trees." The festival is a national program where companies sponsor professionally decorated Christmas trees that are displayed to the public. Monies raised from this display and an auction of the trees are donated to a local charity.

In 1990 the association chose a tree that had already been decorated, but last year it asked a profes-

sional designer, Karen Donahue, to decorate a tree with a golf theme. The tree's ornaments were miniature golf shoes, putting greens, golf bags, "birdies," and an "eagle" at the top. A garland around it was made of golf tees. The base of the tree was covered with Astro-Turf, on which was laid crested golf balls from local golf courses.

Donahue also designed a wreath around a golf flag from the Heart's Scholarship & Research tournament which was signed by Paul

Azinger, Fred Couples, Lee Trevino and Tom Watson — obtained by Fearis at a tournament Watson hosts at Blue Hills each year. The theme of the tree and wreath was "Birdies & Eagles: These Are a Few of My Favorite Things."

The tree, Fearis reported, won two honors. A panel of judges selected it as "Most Unique" tree and chose it as one of eight trees, of 80 entered, for the live auction. The tree and wreath received the highest bid of any tree — \$525.

Fifteen thousand people viewed the festival, with the Heart's name appearing on a sign in front of the tree and wreath and also on an information board at the entrance to the display. A television station also showed the tree and wreath to its viewers.

Meanwhile, the Heart also donated a check for \$500 to the Redemptorist Center, which feeds more than 175 families weekly, assists the aging and provides emergency assistance and self-help programs, social activities, an outreach program, and free health facility.

"Obviously, the Heart of America GCSA received a lot of publicity for its involvement with the Festival of Trees and the Redemptorist Center," Fearis said. "However, it was also gratifying to be able to help the needy during the Christmas season."

"The Heart will continue pursuing those public relations ventures that expose our name to the public — golfing and non-golfing."

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Coopman, Mita earn Nicklaus' recognition as top supers

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Jack Nicklaus has honored Michael S. Coopman of Dove Canyon Golf Club in Mission Viejo, Calif., as the national Superintendent of the Year. The International Nicklaus Superintendent of the Year honor was awarded to Minehiro Mita of Japan Memorial Golf Club in Kobe City, Japan.

"Golf course maintenance has become a state-of-the-art science over the years, and both Michael and Minehiro have mastered their skills in maintaining superior golf facilities," said Nicklaus, chairman and chief executive officer of Golden Bear International. "Both have overseen golf courses from construction to completion and established a level of maintenance to compare with any course I have seen."

Coopman was named course superintendent of Dove Canyon in July 1988, and was responsible for overseeing the course's transition from construction to grow-in, maintenance to its opening in 1991. Prior to Dove Canyon, Coopman was employed at Bear Creek Golf Club in Temecula, Calif. Coopman graduated from Michigan State University.

Mita becomes the second Japanese superintendent to receive the award and has overseen the responsibilities at Japan Memorial since 1988. Prior to his work at Japan Memorial, Mita served as superintendent at Sunnyfield Golf Club near Mito City, Japan. He recently accepted a new position as golf course superintendent at the new course being designed by Nicklaus at Ishioka outside of Tokyo.