

## THE WADSWORTH PHILOSOPHY

## Do the job the way you'd want it done for you

By MARK LESLIE

Reflecting on the 16 people who have worked for him and gone on to golf course design, Brent Wadsworth said, "Yes, there are quite a few." But the ultimate question is, What did they expect to learn?

"First, they're trying to learn all the construction practices — all the little details — that go into making a golf course," he said. "Beyond that, they observe and bring up questions, ideas and thoughts relative to the designer's skills and the elements he projects into a course.

"They are constantly looking at those types of things. This is probably what leads them into

the next step — which is working for an architect."

Wadsworth singled out Keith Foster and Craig Schreiner as aspiring architects who "laid it on the line. They said up front that they wanted to some day be designers. They weren't hiding anything. They weren't going to leave without you knowing it. And they were very interested in learning everything they could about our business. You could feel that happening. What they were contributing to was not only our work but their own learning processes. And you could tell that by the way they handled themselves."

Qualities he looks for are "high

integrity and decent moral character," Wadsworth said. "Those things you don't always find out until later. But they surface with those who stay with us.

"We have an opportunity to hire people all over the country simply because we travel. We have a broad spectrum to look at. The ones we end up with are people who are going to further our concepts of good business and who like to work. They remain because of the intense human efforts that they make and we require."

Wadsworth was an architect in  
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## Would-be architects learn trade with Wadsworth

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thought, 'Is this the way I should conduct myself? Is this the way Brent would conduct himself?' I value his honesty, integrity and sincerity above anyone else's in the business." — Foster.

• "You're going to get the same product no matter who in the company you work with or where you are. They have an ingrained corporate philosophy: Brent always wants the job to finish with everybody happy. If he has to spend more money that wasn't in the contract, Brent will go the extra mile to get the whole thing turnkeyed. Others might say, 'Here are the keys. You can drive it away. But it's missing a hubcap.'" — Nugent.

• "In the construction business you want to perform at a high-quality level, yet you still have to get the job done and on time and under budget. Blending all that has made Brent successful. If he came out on a job and saw something that would make a product better, he wouldn't rest until it was done." — Dasher.

Dasher even has a list of "Brentisms" gathered during his work for — and now with — Wadsworth:

The right way — Means you always have time to go back and fix something.

Work hard to get lucky — Means you can put yourself into position for big jobs, great opportunities and good fortune by making sure you do your work thoroughly and completely.

Equalizers — Refers to sometimes small, sometimes large design elements that help swing the advantage from the long hitter to the short hitter.

Sometimes you do your best work by accident — Be smart enough to recognize when an unplanned or unexpected element is just what you need, knowing when you have done enough is very important.



*If he came out on a job and saw something that would make a product better, he wouldn't rest until it was done.'*

— Mike Dasher

this kind of background," Dasher said. "The wealth of knowledge a young man could get is staggering — first as a trainee and then as superintendent working with a number of architects and difficult projects."

"A lot of what architects lack in field construction experience in terms of schedules, times, drawings, specifications — everything," Schreiner said, adding that with his Wadsworth experience, "Builders can see when they come out on my site that I have

the contractor in mind in addition to the superintendent and the owner. I learned how architecture applies to the construction, especially natural drainage and downtime because of rain."

As for Foster: "I had always considered myself a very detailed person... But Brent and I would look at mounds and he would talk about shaving off 3 inches — and that was over a distance of 200 yards. We'd look at a golf course through a microscope, Brent's eyes."

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When the American Society of Golf Course Architects gave Brent Wadsworth (front, fourth from left) the Donald Ross Award last year, all members who had worked with him posed for a picture. All but a few in the banquet hall joined in.

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## The Brent Wadsworth Way: Do unto others...

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1958 when he was driven into the construction business because he couldn't find enough good builders.

Since then, he has cut a swath from his offices in Florida to those in Illinois, Arizona and Hawaii. But building a reputation for strong work ethic all came naturally to him.

"It comes down to human nature — dealing with something the way you would want it done if you were the client," Wadsworth

said. "If you can apply that, plus the good business practices of life (careful accounting, careful elements of sales and running a very tight ship), you will provide the extra elements that are a value to a customer."

A dissertation he tries to give to each employee is:

"We all serve somebody. Remember, you're not hiring somebody, you're serving them. When you recognize that and put yourself in that mode, it seems you'll perform at a higher level

than others."

His basic work ethic, he said, is "get to the job early in the morning, work late at night and give everything you've got to the work at hand."

Those who succeed are "those who really want to give a good value to people they serve," he said.

Wadsworth pointed to John Cotter, his overall general manager, as exemplifying "all the human basic characteristics of the type of

people who have made our business successful through the years. He was my first guy and he's still there. And everything I am, I feel he has carried forward and projected to other people... Everywhere he goes he is well-respected. He is fair and trustworthy and kind and gentlemanly. If all those things are practiced on a regular basis, those people succeed in life, not only working for somebody but for themselves as well."

A reverse twist to like-father, like-son model

So, where does Brent Wadsworth send his own offspring to work?

"Oh, Eric Wadsworth is a field architect and construction manager for us," said Tim Nugent, who himself worked for the elder Wadsworth.

### Wadsworth apprentices

A number of people in the golf industry have apprentices for Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. Here is a list:

#### INDEPENDENT ARCHITECTS

Keith Foster of Keith Foster and Associates in Phoenix, Ariz.

Rick Jacobson of Rick Jacobson Golf Course Design in Libertyville, Ill.

Paul Loague of Aurora, Ill.

Craig Schreiner of Kansas City, Mo.

George Williams of Williams, Gill & Associates in River Falls, Wis., now in Texas

#### ARCHITECTS WORKING FOR ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS

Mike Dasher of Arthur Hills & Associates

Tom Johnson of Dennis Griffith and Associates

Jim Slugocki of J. Michael Poellot

Kevin Sutherland of Fazio Golf Course Designers, Inc.

Tom Walker of Gary Player Design

#### ARCHITECTS' SONS

Tim January, son of Don

Carter Morrish, son of Jay

Tim Nugent, son of Dick

Roger Packard, son of Larry

David Flatt, son of Larry

#### CONTRACTORS

Paul Clute of Paul Clute & Associates

Joe Niebur of Niebur Golf Construction

Larry Smith of Mid-American Golf Construction

#### RELATED FIELDS

Jay Knoll, construction consultant in Mexico

Dr. John Hall III, professor and Extension Service representative for Virginia Polytech

#### FOSTER CHOSEN

MCO Properties, Inc. of Fountain Hills, Ariz., has chosen Keith Foster and Associates to be the architects for an 18-hole championship course. The high desert site called Sunridge Canyon is situated directly east of greater Phoenix overlooking the Verde Valley. Construction is scheduled to begin in June.

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