

MacCurrach cops first annual Best Small Builder laurels

By MARK LESLIE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Is it in the genes? A young Allan MacCurrach III, whose father Allan Jr. was head agronomist for the PGA Tour, started work on golf courses by filling a 5-gallon pickle bucket with rocks and sticks during construction of TPC at Sawgrass here. Eighteen years later, at the Golf Course Builders Association of America annual banquet in Las Vegas, Feb. 9, Allan III will be presented the first Golf Course Small Builder of the Year award.

It is a fitting early celebration of his 10th year in business, but bittersweet in that his father died Jan. 14, just hours after receiving word of his son's achievement.

The new Small Builder category in the annual awards competition was created for contractors not in the mega-size category of firms that build eight, 10 or more courses each year. Last year's Golf

Course Builder of the Year winner Bill Kubly of Landscapes Unlimited said then: "There are some builders who do every bit as good a job as we do, but they only build one, two, or three courses. Too bad they don't get any recognition."

Now they can. And the first among them is MacCurrach Golf Construction Inc., whose 1996 clients, in aggregate, rated them 9.75 on a scale of 10. Daylen Inc. of Fresno, Calif., and Tom Roe & Son Construction Inc. of Big Timber, Mont., also finished high in the balloting.

"The best we have ever seen in every respect," said Country Club of North Carolina General Manager Tom Lee of MacCurrach, whom he hired to totally renovate 18 of his 36 holes in Pinehurst.

I was a one-employee show... I made sure I could park my dozer close enough to the tractor so I could jump from one to the other without having to hit the ground.'

— Allan MacCurrach



Restoration of the William Flynn-designed Indian Creek Country Club kept MacCurrach Golf Construction, Inc. busy in Indian Creek Village, Fla., during 1996.

Saying that he has never had a paycheck outside of a golf course, MacCurrach credited his first boss, Pete Dye, with infusing excitement into him about the whole golf industry.

"Pete Dye's legacy is going to be all these great golf courses he's designed," he said. "But he has done tremendous things to spur interest in this business. He sure did with me."

MacCurrach worked with Pete and Alice Dye building the Honors Course in Chattanooga, Tenn., and TPC at Plum Creek (now Plum Creek Country Club). He then earned a two-year

associate's degree in turf management at the University of Massachusetts and landed a job with another key person in his professional development: Jim Holmes, a golf course contractor based in Greensboro, Ga.

"Everything with Pete Dye is fun and exciting and you run on that energy," he said. "Jim Holmes taught me a great deal about the business side of building golf courses and that there is even a way to make a paycheck at this sort of thing."

Leaving Holmes, MacCurrach worked with Bob Cupp as project director

Continued on page 58

THE MOST ADVANCED CONTROLS IN THE INDUSTRY JUST HAPPEN TO BE ON THE FINEST PUMPING SYSTEM

Watertronics Pumping Systems, with Watervision® Controls



Watervision® UL Listed Controls:

- Provides remote access, Windows based, fully interactive control. Monitor your pumping system with the easy-to-use computer interface from your office or home.
- Intuitive, simple, point and press, touch-sensitive computer control panel with built-in maintenance and troubleshooting screens.
- "Ride Through" self diagnostics analyze system faults, and automatically keeps your station on line. No need to lose sleep during critical night watering cycles.
- Exclusive, patented, *Electronic Butterfly Valves* provide surge-free back-up pressure regulation in the event of VFD faults and smooth pump start-stop transitions that other stations lack.
- Breathe new life into your existing pump station with Watertronics touchscreen controls and electronic regulating valves.



Pumping System:

- All units custom-built to your watering schedule requirements, at costs comparable to others' off-the-shelf models.
- The only manufacturer to provide full dynamic testing of every unit at the factory, with certification of performance.
- Exclusive *Mechanical Seals* on vertical turbine pumps are maintenance-free, eliminating bothersome packing adjustments and spraying water.
- The most durable, best looking finish in the industry — baked epoxy undercoat plus baked UV resistant polyurethane top coat.
- One-piece, structurally engineered, seamless deck eliminates rust-prone welds, sharp edges and debris-collecting surface pockets.

Learn how over 30 years of irrigation pumping experience can make your life easier, and your watering system more dependable and efficient: Call Watertronics today to get the whole story about superior Watervision controls, retrofit conversions, and custom pumping systems:

1-800-356-6686



525 Industrial Drive Hartland, WI 53029 fax: 414-367-5551

'This is the third or fourth golf course I've worked with [SAJO], and they're absolutely outstanding.'

— Harry Yewens,
Longwood Golf Club

SAJO succeeds Landscapes

Continued from page 56

Sakocius wants the growth to stop there.

"At one point we looked at doing seven projects at a time," he said. "But I feel there are only so many good golf course personnel out there and you should do only what you have good people for. As you expand, you start getting

spread too thin. That happened once to us. We had mistakes we had to go back and fix. And I think that's why people like us so much — how we treat our problems.

"The top builders do great work. The difference is how you handle the problems."

Company morale is another crucial factor in the SAJO

success, Sakocius said. "We try to get our people home to see their families, or fly their families to see them. That's worked out well.

"If you are going to keep good people, who are going to watch out for your company's interests, you have to help them first."

The biggest reward for Sakocius as a builder?

"To see the finished

product," he said. "I like to see them just before they're planted. They look so good to me when they're brown. That's as good as they are going to look for a couple of years."

Asked if eight years ago he thought he might reach the apex of the business this quickly, Sakocius said: "No. When I first started I thought I should get more recognition and work than I did. That never happens as soon as people want it to happen. I decided at one point to put my head down, keep plugging and be satisfied with a job well done. And hope that some day someone would notice."

They have.

This publication gives you good reading, good writing and good arithmetic.

We present the information in our articles clearly, accurately and objectively. That's good writing. Which means good reading.

We present the information in our circulation statement clearly, accurately and objectively. That's good arithmetic.

BPA International helps us provide precise and reliable information to both advertisers and readers.

An independent, not-for-profit organization, BPA International audits our circulation list once a year to make sure it's correct and up to date. The audit makes sure you are who we say you are.

This information enables our advertisers to determine if they are reaching the right people in the right marketplace with the right message.

The audit also benefits you. Because the more a publication and its advertisers know about you, the better they can provide you with articles and advertisements that meet your information needs.

BPA International. Circulation Intelligence for Business & Consumer Media.

270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, 212-779-3200.



Allan
MacCurrach

MacCurrach wins

Continued from page 57

during construction of Indianwood Golf & Country Club in Lake Orion, Mich., then got his first job as a golf course builder on his own. It was in 1987 and the project was to rebuild a driving range and chipping area, and a few putting greens at the Coun-try Club of Muirfield in Ohio.

"I was a one-employee show at that time," he recalls. "I made sure I could park my dozer close enough to the tractor so I could jump from one to the other without having to hit the ground."

Now MacCurrach Golf carries 14 to 16 full-time employees, a number that peaks at 60 or 70 during building season.

"I have been absolutely blessed," he said. "Blessed might be a little romantic for your readers, but along the road I've been extremely blessed — with the clients and all the architects I've worked with."

MacCurrach credited a great deal of his success to his wife LeAnn, who runs the office, and his three primary job superintendents, Chris Lepanto, Doug Seldon and Jeff Tourgeau. Lepanto, who is in his 9th year with the firm, is "my foremost 'A' man," MacCurrach said.

And his dad? "I called my father my gray-haired advisor," MacCurrach said.

Without that initial exposure to golf, where would he be?

"When people ask me why or how I came to be, I say it's the only thing I've ever done and the only thing I've ever known, and I'd be lost if I ever had to do something else,"