

Old Tom Morris Award-winner, Crenshaw, credits work of supers

MARK LESLIE

LAS VEGAS — Hailed as setting "a new standard" by which future Old Tom Morris Award winners will be judged, Ben Crenshaw here deferred praise to his superintendents who were honoring him, his mentor who taught him the game, and the greats of the past and present. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) presented Crenshaw the Old Tom Morris Award at its annual banquet during the International Golf Course Conference and Show. They cited his love of the game and the image he gives it. The winner of 19 PGA Tour tournaments, a consummate minimalist" golf course designer, and a leading collector of golf memorabilia, Crenshaw earned the compliments.



Ben Crenshaw

About superintendents, he said: "I'm amazed at the job you do. You do it so well. And a lot of times I don't get a fair shake... This [award] means the world to me."

About Old Tom Morris, he said: "Old Tom preached and followed the way of nature. At St. Andrews [which he maintained] it's hard to imagine the hand of man did not touch that golf course. He took care of it, inexpensively, and left nature alone.

"I happen to admire so many things about Old Tom. My [memorabilia] collecting has been mostly architecture and Scottish. It starts with Old Tom. He spread the game with equipment, with balls and club-making. He said, 'I've got my golf and my God to see me through.' He read a page out of his family Bible every night... We have Old Tom to thank for the character of golf today.

• About past Old Tom Morris Award winners, such as Arnold Palmer, Patty

Berg, Gene Sarazen, Robert Trent Jones Sr. and Tom Fazio, he said: "These recipients I've put on the pedestal forever. I can't believe I'm joining them."

• About his good friend and mentor Harvey Penick: "I've been so lucky in my life to have been in contact with people in this game who are like Old Tom, a very simple man with simple needs... Harvey typified what Old Tom told people: Golf's endearing qualities are endless and ageless. And we are lucky to have people today in golf who are the same way."

• About his course design work: "Our architectural business is so much fun. Old Tom would have had a twinkle in his eye if he had seen [the Sand Hills property in Mullen, Neb.]. At an earlier press conference he said of his design partner Bill Coore: "He's an

agronomist and has taught me so much about this field. In turn, I try to work on the playability of the ... design. Bill's got a soft spot for the superintendent, because that is how he got his start working with Pete Dye."

At the press conference, GCSAA outgoing President Bruce Williams said: "We've raised the bar by making Ben Crenshaw the Old Tom Morris Award winner. He sets a new standard by which to judge all future winners."

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Taking the presidential gavel from Williams during the banquet, Paul McGinnis said: "Whatever your station in life is tonight — nine-hole, private, resort, multi-course — GCSAA has something for you, to help you to be a better superintendent..."

"From this night forward we'll talk about where we are and where we're going."



A BREAK IN THE ACTION

Architects Pete Dye (from left) and Dr. Michael Hurdzan chat with Golf Course News Publisher Charles von Brecht in the GCN booth during the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America show last month in Las Vegas.

McNitt, Milett, Wetzel and Green picked for Watson Fellowships

LAS VEGAS — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) has selected four researchers and educators as the 1996 recipients of The GCSAA Watson Fellowships.

Each winner received a \$5,000 award and an all-expense-paid trip to GCSAA's 68th International Golf Course Conference and Show held here Feb. 6-12.

Those selected for The GCSAA Watson Fellowships must demonstrate academic excellence, communication skills, commitment to a career as an instructor and/or scientist, accomplishments in research and education, and the potential to contribute significantly to the industry.

The 1996 Watson Fellowship recipients include:

- Andrew S. McNitt, Ph.D., candidate

in agronomy-turfgrass science at Pennsylvania State University

- Steven M. Milett, Ph.D., candidate in turfgrass pathology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

- Henry C. Wetzel III, Ph.D., candidate in plant pathology at Kansas State University

- David E. Green II, Ph.D., candidate in plant pathology at the University of Georgia

The GCSAA Watson Fellowship program is offered by the GCSAA Foundation and is sponsored by The Toro Company in honor of James Watson, Ph.D., a pioneer in the field of turfgrass research. The selection committee consists of Watson, chair, and representatives of The Toro Company, The GCSAA Scholarship Committee and university professors.

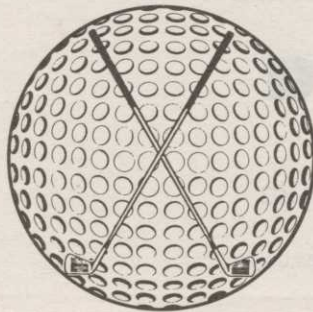
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