

# Walker named NGCOA's Rossi winner

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The National Golf Course Owners Association presented the 2000 Don Rossi Award to Curt Walker at an awards dinner January 27 during the NGCOA Annual Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.



Curt Walker

The Don Rossi Award, named in honor of NGCOA's founding president, recognizes individuals

who have made significant and long-lasting contributions to the association. Recipients are nominated and voted on by the board of directors. Walker was the association's first executive director, taking the helm in 1984 when it was being run by a management company. He negotiated a separation from the company, moved the association's headquarters to Minnesota and changed its name from the National Association of Public Golf Courses to the Golf Course Association — all while running Fort Snelling Golf Course, a nine-hole public layout.

"Curt took over the association at a time when it was heavily in debt and basically 'dead,'" said Peter Trenchard, NGCOA board member and founding member of the association. "He agreed to take the office to his home and ran it free of charge. He was single-handedly responsible for keeping the association alive and making it financially solvent."

Although Walker's first charge was restoring the association's financial integrity, education remained a key initiative. Under his direction, the GCA developed a number of marketing manuals, as well as the "Uniform System of Accounting Practices for Public Courses." He also helped grow the association from 250 members to more than 450.

Walker stepped down as executive director in 1989 to devote more time to his course. He remained out of association management until 1997 when he helped found the Minnesota Golf Course Owners Association, a chapter of the NGCOA. A year later, he became its executive director.

After a career of aggressive initiatives, however, Walker is humbled by the Don Rossi Award. "Given the fact that Don Rossi was the first authority figure I met in the golf industry, receiving an award named after him is daunting."

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Also at the NGCOA show, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America received the Award of Merit

The Award of Merit is presented to an individual or group who has made significant and long-term contributions to the game. Past recipients include Chi Chi Rodriguez, The PGA Tour, Peggy Kirk Bell and Robert Trent Jones Sr.

Since its founding in 1926, the GCSAA has been committed to

the ongoing education of its members. To fulfill its mission, the association provides more than 200 days of educational programming at the national and regional level.

The NGCOA also announced it is expanding its marketing and communication activities. The cornerstone of the new program is *Golf Business* magazine, the

official publication of the NGCOA, which began publishing in-house in December. Waterfront Publishing Inc. had published the magazine since its inception four years ago.

The current editorial staff from Waterfront Publishing that has been responsible for *Golf Business* magazine's editorial content and design will accept similar positions with the NGCOA.

Editor Jack Bacot will continue in the same role and be NGCOA director of marketing and communications. Wendy Saari is director of public relations and associate editor for *Golf Business*. Ronnie Musselwhite, managing editor and Robbin Stratford, art director, will remain in the same positions and take on expanded roles in the NGCOA communications department.

