

Brent Wadsworth points to integrity in accepting builders' Rossi Award

By MARK LESLIE

NEW ORLEANS — Citing him for "single-handedly inventing" the course construction business, Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA) President Bill Kubly presented Brent Wadsworth the 10th annual Donald A. Rossi Award here, Feb. 18.



Brent Wadsworth

Speaking at the GCBA awards dinner, Kubly said Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. has "stood out like the Empire State Building among two-story buildings. In an industry as fragmented as ours, Brent Wadsworth has managed to keep his company at the top of the industry as long as the industry has been around... Without him, many of us would not be here tonight. It is time that we, the golf course builders, honor our best."

The Rossi Award honors the memory of the former executive director of the association.

Golf course architect Arthur Hills said of Wadsworth: "His employees and friends know

that he will encourage them, challenge them, sometimes needle them and at other times put you on the spot. And even, at times, he will exasperate you. Yet he is beloved to everyone who knows him.

"One trait stands out, and that is his integrity. You know always that he and all his employees are going to do every last thing they can to make every job as

good as it can be. His company has always prospered, but prosper or not, each course is impeccably done and sometimes at a loss of a great deal of money."

Brent and his wife, Jean, also established The Wadsworth Golf Charity Foundation three years ago to give grants that make "the character-building attributes of the game more accessible to more people, with the ultimate goal of making the world become a more honorable, gentler place."

"It seems he has been fostering those goals during the 40 years that I have known him," Hills said.

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Gary Grigg, left, with Robert Trent Jones Jr. at GCSAA conference.

GCSAA past president joins Jones Jr. company

By MARK LESLIE

NEW ORLEANS — Gary Grigg has joined Robert Trent Jones Jr.'s Greenscape Ltd., which will make a major effort to restore Robert Trent Jones Sr. golf courses around the world.

As opposed to contracting, the new venture is primarily a service, providing Grigg, shapers and supervisors to construction sites in conjunction with the firms installing irrigation, drainage, etc.

"We will package each deal according to the needs of the owners," Jones Jr. announced at the GCSAA conference here. "We will continue doing a select number of new courses worldwide, as we always have. Gary and [course designer] Al Furber will supply a service of shapers and supervisors to the projects under construction. But secondly, we want to continue the legacy of my father, who started in the '30s, and carry on our work and the family tree. The brand name Robert Trent Jones is a recognized name. To maintain the integrity of his philosophy

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Best Builders MacCurrach, Miller cite employees

By MARK LESLIE

NEW ORLEANS — Allan MacCurrach III of MacCurrach Golf Construction, Inc. accepted the annual Golf Course News Builder of the Year Award, and Louis Miller of Golf Development Construction the Best Small Builder of the Year Award during a banquet held here by the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA).

The award-winners were determined following surveys taken from golf course developers, architects and superintendents on projects completed in 1999.



Allan MacCurrach



Louis Miller

MacCurrach, who three years earlier won the Best Small Builder Award, thanked the Lord and the "many, many people" who have been helpful to MacCurrach Golf.

His Jacksonville, Fla.-based company, he said, "has really been blessed. We used hard work to survive. We have transformed that hard work into success. It's an extra compliment that developers, architects and superintendents like our work."

Among his employees, he cited "Twin Towers"

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Ultradwarfs:

Know the positives and negatives, says Kloska

By MARK LESLIE

NEW ORLEANS — Know your golfers, is perhaps the most crucial advice when considering installing one of the new ultradwarf Bermudagrasses.

Though superintendents looking for a 9-1/2 to 10 roll on their Stimpmeter might jump at the chance to plant the ultradwarfs on their courses, perhaps their golfers want a less-slick surface, said Rob Kloska of Jupiter Island Club in Hobe Sound, Fla.

Kloska spoke on "Choosing Ultradwarfs for Greens," drawing on his own experience. In June 1998 he planted all seven varieties on one green: Champion, Tifeagle, Floradwarf, MS Supreme, Mini Verdes, along with the standard dwarf Bermudas Tifdwarf and 328. Champion and Mini Verde were developed in Texas, while Tifeagle hails from Georgia, Floradwarf from the University of Florida and MS Supreme from Mississippi.

The new ultradwarfs, Kloska said, offer many advantages, but those may be negated by disadvantages — notably the

need for intensive maintenance and their intolerance to shade.

Kloska listed a number of grow-in and maintenance tips for superintendents choosing ultradwarfs. But first, he suggested weighing certain factors, including the importance of a uniform root zone, and excellent irrigation and drainage.

"Older greens," he said, "are not designed for these [fast] Stimpmeter readings. Increased green speeds also mean fewer cupping areas."

Shade and lack of air movement will be the most difficult problems if the ultradwarfs are planted, he said, adding: "And if you have adequate staff and can do intensive care, it will be an easier transition. For us, it was not difficult, but for other people it will be."

Extra walk-behind greens mowers will be needed, and a good mechanic is important because more sharpening and grinding is required. "He will have to maintain a cutting height of .145 and as low as .110 or .100 inch," Kloska said.

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Aggressive management practices can compromise the health, quality and playability of traditional bermudagrass varieties. Tifdwarf, Tifgreen, and even some of the new superdwarf varieties become stressed when subjected to reduced mowing height, frequent verticutting, increased topdressing and minimal irrigation. TifEagle, on the other hand, was created to withstand just this kind of abuse. In test after test, TifEagle's quality rated superior to Tifdwarf and other warm-season grasses. Improve the speed, consistency and playability of your greens. Insist on TifEagle.

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Wadsworth

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Wadsworth said that since he formed his company in 1958, the cost of new courses has risen from \$100,000 to millions.

"These past 50 years have brought many opportunities," he said. "Proof of that is right here in this room tonight. This great game is fundamentally why we are here. It is the foundation of our existence. It is wonderful that so many people can play this game throughout their whole lives. It's an intensive game, a devoted game..."

Wadsworth, who once called architect's renderings "cartoons," added a couple of good-natured digs at architects.

"Builders now have to accept a new meaning for the word 'responsible,'" he said. "It means 'pin everything you can and anything you can on the builder.'"

"But we need them and we need each other," he added. "Think of it this way: They are designing today's golf courses that are going to be tomorrow's rebuilding opportunities."

Asked recently what was needed to start a course construction business, Wadsworth joked that he answered, "Four things: a ruler to measure an owner's pockets for his ability to pay for the work; a level to make sure the grades are uneven so architects can tell you what you are doing wrong; a crystal ball to know when to run for cover from a natural disaster; and a pocketful of cash to cover the losses you are going to incur regardless of all the trust you put into people's intentions."

Wadsworth cited the GCBA's original organizers, whom he called "bold people who understood a need for a growing industry." He singled out Jim Kirchdorfer, the one remaining founding member in the 28-year-old organization, and Perry Dye, who financially kept it alive when it was in trouble in the late-1980s and early 1990s.

And he thanked his employees who, he said, are the best. "Your long-standing devotion to my business principles are recognized, and I will always be thankful to you," he said.

"Most importantly," he said, "please remember: first, the game of golf, support it. Second, the builders association, support it. Third, be patient, be persistent and be what the game is all about — perform in a gentlemanly manner. If we follow those thoughts we have a bright future." ▶

Arnold's last hurrah at GCBA

NEW ORLEANS — The Golf Course Builders Association of America dinner here marked the last major function for outgoing Executive Vice President Phil Arnold, who is leaving to start his own golf photography business, Golfscape Photography, in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Outgoing President Bill Kubly of Landscapes Unlimited credited Arnold as the driving force behind the GCBA's growth, over the last nine years, from 60 to 280 members and from a revenue of \$50,000 to \$500,000 per year.

Best Builders: The best you can be

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Brian Almony, the general manager, and Tom Webber, a project superintendent, along with senior construction superintendent Chris Lapanto and superintendents Doug Seldon, Jeff Tourangeau and Chris Kleinsmith.

Meanwhile, Louisville, Ky.-based Miller said, "This is just an incredible honor from *Golf Course News*."

He paraphrased astronaut Chuck Yeager as saying, "If you like to do a job, some day you get to be real good at it."

And he added that his "inspiration from the beginning came from Brent Wadsworth," president of Wadsworth Golf Construction Co. ▶



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