

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.

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



Brent Wadsworth

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 philoso-

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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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Grigg, Jones Jr. to 'refresh' Jones Sr. golf courses

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phy ... we want to offer those courses that want to maintain that brand name an opportunity to upgrade, remodel, refresh."

Indeed, Jones Jr. will proactively contact all the Jones Sr. clubs and offer them his services. "We will ask that they not put in new irrigation systems or

make other changes without thinking of the authenticity of the course," Jones Jr. said. "Gary will take the lead with the restorations. We need him to help the club and superintendent, to give them a comfort level."

Grigg, who has overseen construction of 24 courses including Jones Sr.'s Lodge of Four

Seasons at Lake of the Ozarks in 1970-75, will be responsible for the renovations. The former president of GCSAA supervised construction of 16 courses during 10 years with Kindred and Co. of Houston. Among those was the Jones Jr.-designed Sentryworld Golf Course in Stevens Point, Wis. And he most

recently renovated the 36 holes at Royal Poincienna in Florida, while serving as the club's superintendent.

"This will be an exciting and rewarding challenge," Grigg said. "I have so much respect for the Jones family and golf course architects in general and what they have contributed

to the game of golf...

"I intend to do whatever is necessary — agronomic consulting, greenkeeping consulting, grow-in..."

Jones Sr. has designed more than 500 courses, and Jones Jr. pointed out that if his firm, RTJ II, and Greenscape restore one percent a year, "that would be sufficient to keep us busy."

Jones Jr. related his restoration efforts to the controversy over who can best restore Donald Ross's designs and those of other classic architects.

"If my father's two sons and their team aren't his most authentic 'understanders,' then who is?" Jones Jr. asked. "It's our intent to try to authenticate Jones Sr.'s style."

His brother Rees, whose Rees Jones Design has also remodeled some of their father's work, is not involved in this business.

Jones Jr. pointed out that he worked for his father at the height of his career — at Spyglass Hill [in California] and Mauna Kai [in Hawaii], and ran errands at Baltusrol in the 1950s.

"I obviously absorbed the philosophy," he said. "With Gary and his knowledge of all the technical issues, we have a lot to offer."

Jones said he may alter some of the playing characteristics to recognize the changes in equipment. "For example," he said, "we might put a bunker out at 280 [yards from the tee] instead of 250, where he was putting them. But it will have the same look. And it will be in the bracketed form, or whatever form he was using at that particular time."

The Joneses have all the old Jones Sr. plans in a library in Ft. Lauderdale [Fla.].

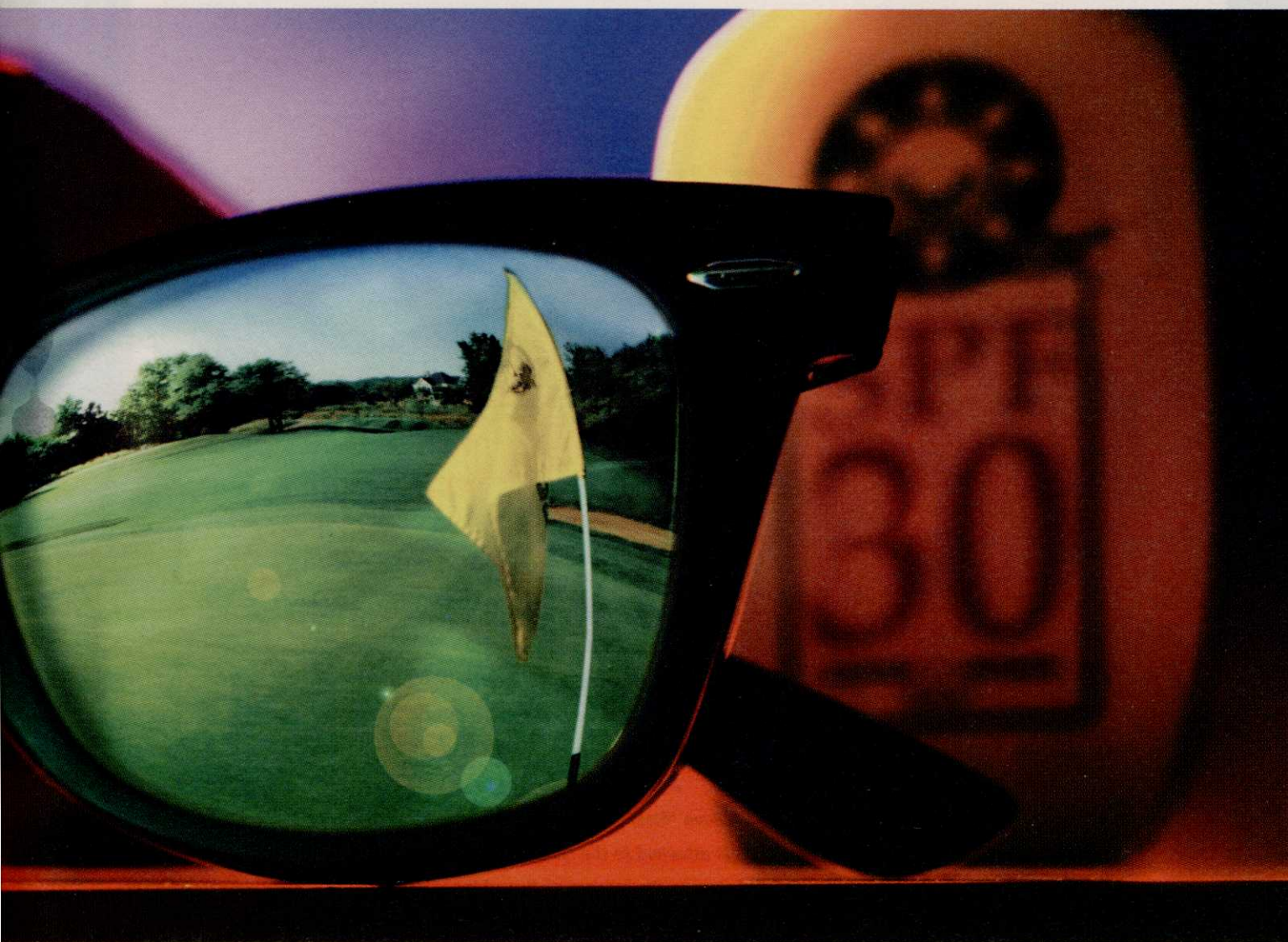
"The great golf courses are built in the field," Jones Jr. said. "You can do architectural wonders with earth-moving equipment today that is dramatic and catches the attention of periodicals, but sometimes you can't maintain it. So the Joneses have always had three basic points of view: strategic design, technical consistency (drainage, drainage, drainage) and maintainability."

...

Meanwhile, RTJ II intends to design about eight new courses a year, instead of the 15 or 16 of the past.

"I intend to be more hands-on," Jones Jr. said. "I agree with [architect] Bob Lohmann, who said architects have to get back to giving service in the field."

Also, Jones Jr. also announced that designers Furber and Bruce Charlton now own equity in the company, and it has formed an alliance with course builder Weitz Golf. ▶



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