

Monroe Miller is a retired golf course superintendent. He spent 36 years as superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, Wis. Miller can be reached at groots@charter.net.



THE MONROE DOCTRINE

WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE MET?

Recently I was daydreaming about my dad, thinking about how much I miss him and the questions I'd like to ask him.

This reflection led me to wonder about ancient relatives who I have spent a lifetime studying through various genealogy projects. Soon I was imagining which ancestors I would like to meet. I could see how they stood, hear their voices and ponder their views on the world and life.

Before long I was thinking about important people in history – Presidents Washington, Monroe and Lincoln, to name a few. Wouldn't it be something to meet old William Shakespeare and listen to what the world's greatest wordsmith had to say? Or how about Mozart, Beethoven or Bach? I would love to meet Martin Luther and John Wesley, Michelangelo,

to know him a bit. He shared stories about his father, Joe. They were great and I wish I'd known him, too.

Good fortune allowed me to meet Sherwood Moore, a gracious gentleman who was a giant among us, so much so he was given the Old Tom Morris Award by GCSAA. I never had the opportunity to meet John Bone, a predecessor at my club of 36 years. He was one of our state chapter's founders and the only man to serve three terms as its president. He wrote extensively in the Green Section Record and the National Greenkeeper. I would have learned a lot.

And who wouldn't cherish the opportunity to meet Col. John Morley, the visionary who led the formation of our modern day GCSAA?

I have been lucky to know many of the professors and scientists who

were influential in the Green Section. Add to this list other well-known professors who played a role early in our business, such as MSU's William Beal, Cornell's Liberty Hyde Bailey and Wisconsin's Aldo Leopold.

Then there's O.J. Noer, one of turf's all-time great agronomists, who died before I was a turf undergrad. He was a great man, a pioneer and an intellect and writer who was accorded the GCSAA DSA three times.

Like most superintendents, I have an interest in course design and designers. It has been a privilege to enjoy a friendship with Geoffrey Cornish. Many of those his junior have been friends, also. And wouldn't it be great to meet Alister Mackenzie, A.W. Tillinghast and C.B. Macdonald and Donald Ross? The best we can do is study their work and read their words.

As a bibliophile I've had contact with many golf writers. I had a warm relationship with Hebert Warren Wind, met the Graffis brothers and have a nice collection of autographed golf books. But in golf's history, Bernard Darwin stands out. Gosh, I would love to have heard his voice and engaged him in conversation.

I would include some tangential individuals, such as equipment pioneer John Deere, landscape architect Fredrick Law Olmstead and U.S. Senator Justin Smith Morrill. Surprisingly, the only players on my list are Bob Jones, Walter Hagen and James Braid.

This brings me to the person I would like to have met the most. He is the obvious choice – Old Tom Morris. With his full beard and stout appearance, he stood out with a presence few had. Biographies of him say he was a friendly, respectful and well-organized person who commanded respect. I don't think I would shrink in his presence, no doubt I would be at a loss of words. For a while, at least. **GCI**

This all brings me to the person I would like to have met the most. He is the obvious choice. – **Old Tom Morris.**

Norman Rockwell. Paul Revere, Ernie Pyle and E.B. White, along with Tom Edison and Henry Ford.

Soon I was contemplating professional ancestors. The relative youth of our profession, my age and many fortuitous opportunities have allowed me to meet and know many industry luminaries and leaders.

I once shared a cab ride with Eb Steiniger, and fairly early in my career I was introduced to Chet Mendenhall. Founding GCSAA member Harry Hanson lived close by and I visited him often. Once, Walter Wood and I were on a program together and he invited me to stay with him if I ever visited St. Andrews. Years ago I had lunch with Richie Valentine and I was delighted

advanced the profession through research, teaching and extension activities. From those at our own land grant university to various men and women around the country – so many to name I'd surely leave someone out. But I have attended their classes, read their textbooks and sought their advice on a personal basis. They all made phenomenal contributions. I can go back as far as Dr. Fred Grau, but I never met Dr. Burt Musser, well known in his time because of his excellent and widely used textbook.

And speaking of textbooks, I'd love to have met Drs. Piper and Oakley, USDA turf researchers who in 1917 authored "Turf for Golf Courses." It was a standard text for years and both