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THE MONROE DOCTRINE

## PRESIDENTS I HAVE KNOWN

One of the hallmarks of my 40-year membership in the GCSAA has been the acquaintance of most of the GCSAA presidents during the period 1973 – present. The presidents are a group that mostly reflects our members – different in many ways but bound together by a love of golf and golf courses. And clearly each was a leader in his own right – you’d have to be to endure the effort required to reach the presidency and then execute the duties of the office.

Over the years I also had an occasional chance to meet a past president from a year well before my career started. Some GCSAA members will remember the annual banquet and show. Seating tickets were required, and I would usually be first or second in line, early in the morning, to get a good ticket. Since past presidents were automatically seated near the front stage, I frequently filled out one of those tables. What a deal – seated among the men who helped write GCSAA’s history. I met Chet Mendelhall, Bob Williams, Sherwood Moore, and John Spodnik that way. And I came to know Cliff Wagoner and Bob Michell even better at those banquet dinners. As I think about it, GCSAA should honor Cliff Wagoner and his wife for their sterling GIS attendance record, which extended well beyond his retirement.

The only president from the 1970s I haven’t met is George Cleaver, but almost as an offset was a very warm relationship with Ted Woehrl. One of the earliest GCSAA seminars in the mid-70s was in Champaign, Ill., and Ted was the GCSAA officer hosting it. From that time on, through our mutual interest in chapter publications, Big 10 sports and golf, we remained good friends. I still miss seeing him. I think that Palmer Maples made

very significant contributions during his time at headquarters, including serving as the GCSAA exec during a transition period. He was a good guy and always had a smile and kind word.

The presidents of the 1980s were a superb group; Jim Wyllie is the only one I never knew. But to this day I treasure the friendship of Mel Lucas and Don Hearn. Both are great men who have contributed mightily to our profession over the years, and have continued to do so in their “retirement.” Mel is a book and history guy,

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like me, only I am strictly an amateur when measured to the enormous knowledge he has. I visited the USGA Museum years ago, and there was an upstairs display of turf equipment from years gone by – “On loan from the collection of Melvin B. Lucas.” No one will match his collections or his library (unless they buy his!) because Mel started collecting so long ago as the son of a superintendent just outside NYC.

Don Hearn is a smart, sincere and friendly man who exemplifies what a GCSAA president should be, in my eye. It is always a good thing to be represented by someone with his class and personality.

Mike Bavier often interacted with Wisconsin superintendents and he’s also been someone I have enjoyed knowing better than most of the past presidents. The same is true for Jim Timmerman, a person I teamed up with to solve what became a difficult problem. He was Dr. Paul Reike’s first grad student at MSU and worked for a time as a Green Section agronomist. He’s a good man. Riley Stottern hired

my assistant at a time he wanted to work and live out west, and Gene Baston was an excellent example of southern hospitality, I learned.

John Segui was a link to the past since he was a little older when he served; I really liked John and enjoyed talking to him about the personalities of our profession from years earlier. I didn’t get to know Dennis Lyon until we both were near retirement. I liked his military service and have come to enjoy his writing.

The 1990s, from my view, was a

period of conflict in the GCSAA and as a chapter publication editor I had a few open spats with some of the presidents.

Jerry Faubel worked in Wisconsin for a few years, so we were proud when he was elected. That was even more true when Bill Roberts, a past president of our chapter, made it to the top of GCSAA. He has done well, is still tangentially involved in golf turf and practices law in a Chicago suburb. Steve Cadenelli was another Midwest guy that I served with on a couple of GCSAA committees and made his acquaintance that way.

Joe Baidy really grew during the time he served on the board, through to his service as president. He was an exceedingly friendly guy in my eyes, but I haven’t seen him for a few years.

Gary Grigg visited Wisconsin while he was on the board, speaking at a chapter meeting in Lake Geneva one spring. His family had Wisconsin ties with the potato industry in the central sands region of our state, and we had a great talk about that. During his term

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## A term as president takes a strong sense of leadership and duty, a huge work ethic and a vision of the direction our profession should go.

and Bruce Williams' term, the controversial chapter affiliation legislation was enacted and I was openly strongly against it. Neither man was happy about that, and I never really recaptured a relationship with Gary.

Bruce was different, however. We battled during that time and from some subsequent time, but got back to normal somehow. Bruce has a great sense of humor can take a shot and give one right back. He has definite skills as a storyteller and skilled writer. My wife and I visited with him for a couple of hours at the GCI booth last year. He's easy to be around and I enjoy seeing him these days.

The opportunity to meet George Renault never happened for me, but I was around Paul McGinnis enough to know he was a really super person who represented the association well in his time.

Dave Fearis and I shared some common threads in our lives that made friendship with him natural. We were both members of Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity – when he was at Purdue and I was at Wisconsin – and we won a GCSAA scholarship the same year – 1967. We had mutual friends in a golf course construction company that did work for him often in the fall of the year. The company was based in my town. Dave had a tough job when he was involved on the board and as president – selling PDI. I know he was frustrated when he asked me to support it and I told him I didn't even know what it was! I guess I was an uninformed member that year.

The new century started with Scott Woodhead, a friend through the chap-

ter publication fraternity that so many past presidents belonged to at one time or another. Mike Wallace and I were on a committee together, as was Sean Hoolehan. I never knew Mike well; Sean appealed to my sense of values of what a president should be. He spoke with confidence, had wide experience as a superintendent and a wonderful personality. Tommy Witt, on the other hand, booted me off the 75th anniversary committee when he was president, claiming I "wasn't doing enough." I was incensed, not just because it wasn't true but because I suspected some politics at work. When I documented my contributions to both the 75th anniversary committee and also our local chapter 75th anniversary celebration, he reinstated me. We have had a cordial relationship since then.

I never met Ricky Heine or Tim O'Neill but went through a GCSAA mission/goals exercise with Dave Downing. He was sharp; he also was the one who called me about the Morley award – I'll always remember that call. Mark Woodard and Jon Madern are two others whom I missed knowing.

I met both Mark Kuhns and Bob Randquist when they came to speak at our Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium, albeit years apart. Mark spoke about his clandestine tree removal program at Oakmont – fascinating! – and Bob gave an excellent lecture on bunker work, years before bunkers garnered the attention they have of late. To me, Bob Randquist embodies the highest personal qualities one could expect in a president; he should consider a run

for an office at the state or national level. Plus, the man can really sing.

I had to go out of my way to introduce myself to Jim Fitzroy in Orlando last year. Jim was walking down a hall in the convention center when I stopped him. He was very pleasant, significant because he has been our leader during an extremely difficult economy. I believe he has done well. He was another of those 1967 GCSAA scholarship winners.

Four years as an AA member has moved me away from the GCSAA somewhat, but past involvement lingers. I once had dinner with Sandy Queen at a GCSAA conference banquet – he was watching Dave Fearis' son while Dave and his wife sat at the head table. Once again, I came to know Pat Finlin during his years as editor of the Heart of America's chapter publication. Their histories tell me that they will do a good job as the GCSAA president.

Some time ago a GCSAA member went to considerable effort to detail what each GCSAA president "gets," – clothing allowance, travel, tournament attendance, etc. It was a fairly long list, but even that list times ten would not be enough to inspire a superintendent to serve as GCSAA president. A term as president takes a strong sense of leadership and duty, a huge work ethic and a vision of the direction our profession should go. It is an enormous job that demands a lot of each president, his family, his employer and his chapter. Very few among us is up to the task. Collectively, the presidents whose pictures hang on the walls of the association headquarters are quite a group.

It has been my pleasure and privilege to have known so many of them. **GCI**