

# GOLF IN AMERICA

# Where We've Gone

The oldest living past presidents of the CMAA, PGA and GCSAA discuss the problems their members faced at the national convention the year they reigned. The part they played in the growth of their associations and their insight into the present and future problems which must be solved to further their associations provides a nostalgic and educating article

By Jerry Olson and Gordon Campbell

Harry Fawcett, Tom Walsh and Joe Ryan—they represent over 130 years of combined talent and dedication to the game of golf and the professional associations which have striven to improve the lot of their members. Nostalgic articles generally appeal to those forgotten retirees who were there from inception through infancy but have somehow been cast aside because time has passed them by.

However, the strength of understanding or knowing the past has a way of giving great insight into the present and future. The Club Managers Assn. of America, the Professional Golfers' Assn. and the Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America each have a very rich historical past. It tends to be forgotten as the associations strive to combat the current problems of rising taxes, Internal Revenue Service guidelines, charges of discrimination, Federal pesticide legislation, competition with discount store merchandisers and anti-

trust investigations by the FTC.

What were some of the problems which confronted these organizations and their presidents in the past? Were they solved or just passed on to another generation? Have the duties and relationships of the club manager, professional and superintendent, with each other and their memberships, evolved or are they still following the traditions of the past?

These are some of the questions GOLFDOM asked when we interviewed the oldest living past presidents of the CMAA (Fawcett 1941); PGA (Walsh 1940), and the GCSAA (Ryan 1938). After talking to these acknowledged leaders of yesteryear, I can definitely conclude that either the associations in the past did a great job of electing presidents who are still contributing today, or these three are "unique" individuals. I'm sure it's an amalgamation of both.

It's amazing to note some of the areas which they have in common:

They were all heavily involved in either starting or evolving their respective association's educational programs. Of their total 240 years, only four years were spent in college. Their golf know-how, however, is comprised of 130 years of "education." They were dedicated toward improving the professional status and working conditions of the members who elected them. They were outspoken and progressive for their day in finding out what was needed to make their associations grow, and then following through to make sure it came about.

The reasons the associations are where they are today and the members enjoy better working conditions are a direct result of the efforts of these three men and others like them. Fawcett, Walsh and Ryan didn't do it alone, and they are the first to point this out, but they were the guiding forces which have molded the programs, professionalism and philosophies of their associations.

*(Continued)*