

Herb Graffis

They called him 'Mr. Golf'

Every time we put out an issue of *Golfdom*, we wonder whether Herbert Butler Graffis is smiling down at us from golf heaven or whether he's spinning angrily in his grave.

That's because Graffis was the father of the original *Golfdom*, the game's first true business publication. Herb and his brother, Joe, created the pint-sized magazine back in 1927 to help course operators (mostly private clubs back then) run their facilities in a more business-like way. It was, by all accounts, the bible of the industry for more than 50 years until it ceased publication (after Graffis sold it) in 1981.

The original *Golfdom* was more than just a trade magazine. Graffis used it as a "bully pulpit" to urge clubs to support formal education for superintendents and consider "radical" new technologies like fairway irrigation, pesticides and maintenance facilities that were more than just barns. In fact, Graffis used the pages of *Golfdom* to popularize the term "golf course superintendent" itself.

"Sooner or later, clubs have to face up to the fact that it takes more than a man with a strong back and a green thumb to handle the job," he wrote in 1936. "Lack of good planning and failure to make intelligent use of modern materials and equipment can easily cost clubs more than the extra salary that would pay for a good superintendent."

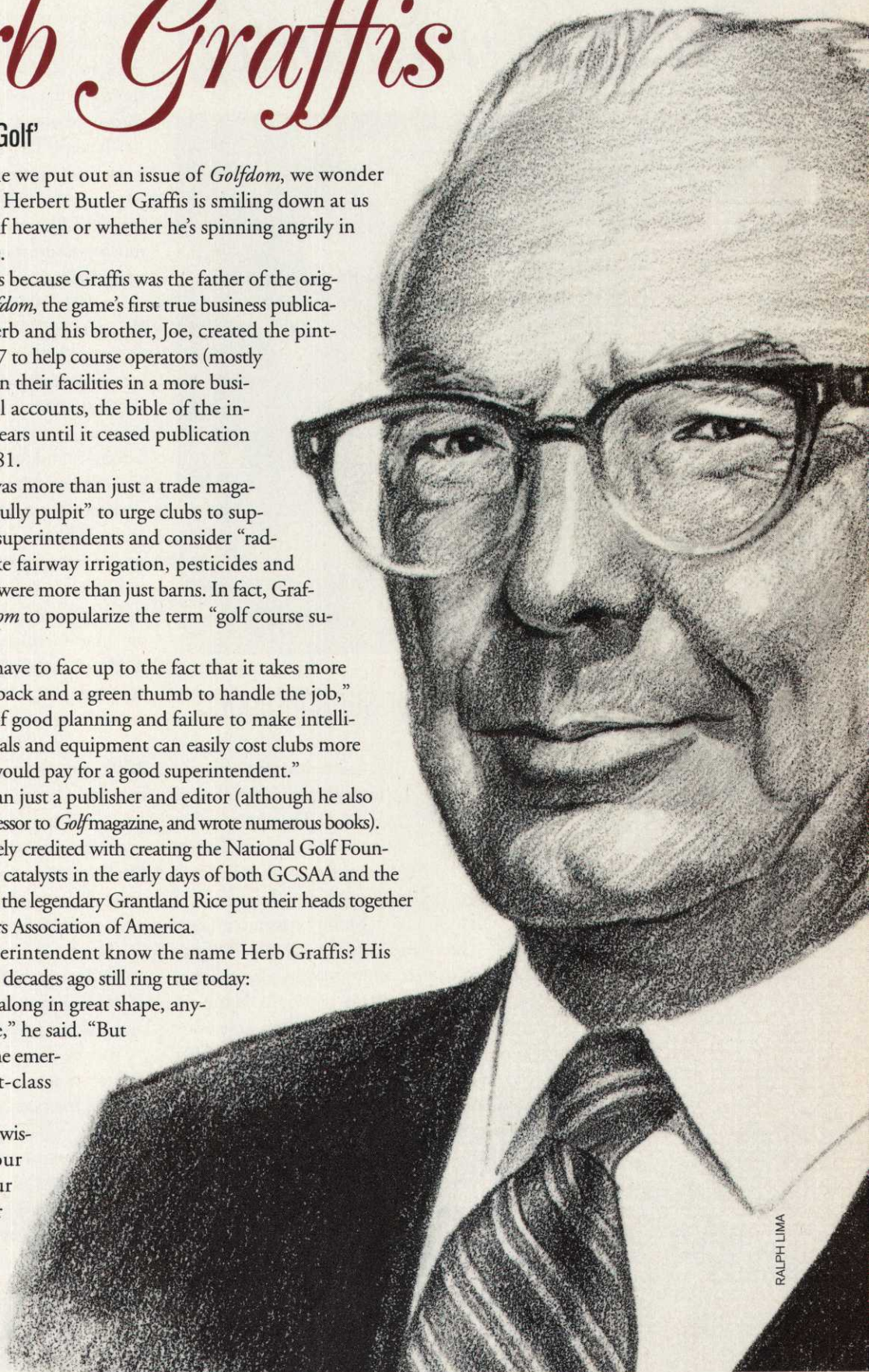
Graffis was far more than just a publisher and editor (although he also launched *Golfing*, the predecessor to *Golf* magazine, and wrote numerous books). He and his brother are largely credited with creating the National Golf Foundation and were important catalysts in the early days of both GCSAA and the PGA of America. Herb and the legendary Grantland Rice put their heads together and formed the Golf Writers Association of America.

Why should every superintendent know the name Herb Graffis? His words from more than four decades ago still ring true today:

"If everything is going along in great shape, anybody can run a golf course," he said. "But when there's heck to pay, the emergency requires a first-class superintendent."

Thanks, Herb, for your wisdom, your words and your eternal patience with our efforts to follow in your footsteps.

— Pat Jones, Publisher



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