

Pioneer Superintendents

We realize there are many trendsetters, but we wanted to recognize these six individuals who have helped make the profession what it is today

Chester Mendenhall —

"We had big ideas, but never in our wildest dreams could we have imagined that an organization like this would exist today."



GCSAA

That was Chester "Chet" Mendenhall, speaking on Sept. 7, 1991, at the dedication of

GCSAA's headquarters high atop a hill overlooking Lawrence, Kan. The occasion was GCSAA's 65th anniversary.

Mendenhall was the star of the program. Looking fit at 95, he delighted the audience with recollections from GCSAA's past.

Mendenhall was the last surviving charter member of GCSAA. He was an enthusiastic advocate of the association and the profession. Not only did he help found GCSAA, he also helped develop it into more than a regional organization.

President of GCSAA in 1948, Mendenhall was a pioneer designer and builder, as well as an innovative and much sought-after superintendent. He spent 31 years as superintendent at Mission Hills CC. He died in 1991.

Eberhard R. Steiniger —

Ninety-five-year-old Eberhard R. Steiniger is known affectionately as the dean of superintendents. He's also called the Grand Old Man, the Super Superintendent and the Superintendent Emeritus.

But perhaps Steiniger is best known as the retired superintendent of Pine Valley GC, a layout perennially ranked at the top of most best golf course lists. Steiniger virtually created Pine Valley. It was a dream to which he devoted his career to make come true.

Steiniger retired from Pine Valley in 1980. The secret to his longevity at such an exclusive and prestigious club?

"I treated all members as if they were my bosses, no matter what they asked," he says. "I was always willing to help members."

Robert M. Williams and Bruce R. Williams —

Bob and Bruce Williams are unique in the 75-year history of GCSAA in that they are the only father and son to have been elected president of the association. Bob served in 1958, and Bruce served in 1996.

Bob began working on golf courses before he was a teenager. He was superintendent at Bellaire CC in Wauconda, Ill., when he was 18. He spent 21 years as superintendent at Bob O'Link GC near Chicago. He designed and built one of the first customized automatic irrigation systems at Bob O'Link and designed a



three-nozzle, tractor-mounted boom sprayer.

"As one of the many superintendents who learned at his feet, I can attest to [my father's] skills, his commitment, and his love for the game and the profession," Bruce says. "He's also one heckuva dad."

Bruce succeeded his father at Bob O'Link GC in 1979. The certified superintendent of Los Angeles CC has a clear vision of the future as it relates to golf course management. Bruce foresees continued improvements in turfgrass education, increased technology and better-quality grasses.

Sherwood A. Moore —

Sherwood Moore, former superintendent at Winged Foot GC in Mamoroneck, N.Y., is the first and only American superintendent to win the Old Tom Morris Award (1990).

The certified superintendent attended the renowned Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. He excelled at his studies and enjoyed a distinguished career.

After serving in World War II, he returned to golf course management and was elected president of GCSAA in 1962. Moore was an expert in turfgrass management and among the best at growing bentgrass in his time. But what people remember most about the 85-year-old Moore is his positive attitude.

"Every person is an individual," he says. "Some people are more fortunate than others, but

we are all human beings and need to be treated as such."

Randy S. Nichols —

Randy Nichols strikes you as a real Southern gentleman. He is soft spoken, courteous and respectful. He's also rarely in a hurry.

But Nichols gets things done — professionally, thoroughly and faster than you might think. Nichols, long-time superintendent at Cherokee Town and CC in Dunwoody, Ga., was president of GCSAA in 1993. His platform emphasized priorities such as research and the environment, GCSAA's international endeavors, and bylaw changes aimed at promoting member services and association growth.

Nichols says one of his most important accomplishments was getting chapter delegates more involved with the association. Nichols invited chapter delegates to GCSAA's headquarters to discuss association business. "They felt like they knew what was going on with the association, and they could relate back to their chapter members," he says.

Nichols recalls his tenure as a "fairly turbulent year." John M. Schilling resigned from GCSAA as its executive director about four months after Nichols began. But overall, Nichols says the position "made me understand what it takes to run an organization."

"It made me a much better employee for my club," he says. — Clay Loyd, Contributor



Bob Williams



Bruce Williams