

Clem Wolfrom

Superintendent of the Detroit Golf Club

You could say Clem Wolfrom was born to be a superintendent. He greeted the world on a cold February morning in 1934 in a room above the clubhouse at the Maple Lane Golf Club in suburban Detroit where his father Clarence was superintendent. The family lived there in the winters for nine years.

Today, Wolfrom is pushing 50 years as a superintendent. The 70-year-old has been the superintendent of the Detroit Golf Club since 1961. Before Detroit, Wolfrom spent six years as superintendent at the Dearborn (Mich.) Country Club.

Clem's father worked as a superintendent for 53 years in Michigan until his death in 1984. Clem and his younger brother Bruce, also a superintendent, designed and built White Pine National Golf Club in Spruce, Mich.

Golfdom: What do you like most about your job?

Satisfaction comes from seeing people enjoy what you and your crew are responsible for — a beautiful golf course.

Golfdom: How have you learned to deal with the pressures of your job?

Face your problems as they arise. Don't let them build up. Keep your critics

informed. Communication is key.

Golfdom: In 50 words or less, describe a good day at work.

Just you and your family waking up healthy is a good start. The 16-mile drive to work each morning gives me time to reflect on the coming day. You know that everything is not going to be perfect, so you must accept that reality — and you will be surprised how good things really are.

Golfdom: What is the most important issue facing superintendents today?

They must improve communication skills.

Golfdom: Finish this sentence: "The best thing that could happen to the golf course maintenance industry would be ..."

... to rid itself of the Stimpmeter.

Golfdom: What's the best advice anybody ever gave you?

My father had two sayings that have really stuck with me through the years. He said, "A job worth doing is a job worth doing well"; and, "Sometimes the harder you fall, the higher you bounce."

Golfdom: What's the best advice you ever gave someone?

Keep a positive attitude.



Golfdom: Who are the three most influential people or groups in the golf course maintenance industry and why?

Right or wrong, the PGA Tour players have a big influence on golf course maintenance. Everybody from green committee chairmen to the United States Golf Association (USGA) listens to their remarks about golf course maintenance. Another big influence is superintendents. Each one is trying to outdo the other. Competition is good, but we shouldn't get carried away with it — green speed at 12 feet, mowing fairways with walk mowers, etc. The third group combines the three golf organizations — the PGA, the USGA and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). There needs to be more communication between the three associations. But it's getting better lately.

Golfdom: If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be and why?

President Bush. I would like to know how he approaches each day.

Golfdom: What is your favorite movie(s)?

The "Godfather" and all its sequels.

Golfdom: What do you eat for breakfast?

Full breakfast on the weekends, and coffee and fruit during the week. ■

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the higher you bounce."

