

Off The Fringe

GCSAA director of sales joins First Tee

For almost five years to the day Mark Bisbing was the director of corporate sales and marketing for GCSAA.

That was until a few weeks ago, when he accepted a new job as the director of corporate relations for the First Tee. Located at the World Golf Village in St. Augustine, Fla., the organization strives to make a positive impact on children's lives through the game of golf. The organization boasts 3.5 million participants and 705 program locations.

In his new position, Bisbing will interact with the First Tee's corporate partners and solicit funds to support the First Tee.

Bisbing says it was with mixed emotions he left the GCSAA. "It's never an easy decision to move your family," he says.

Bisbing says he'll look back at his five years at GCSAA fondly, but also with a feeling that he left behind unfinished business.

"I still see tremendous opportunity and potential for the GCSAA," he says. "I think I left and there were still some opportunities that could be leveraged to elevate

the brand and revenues for the association that weren't getting done."

Bisbing says he enjoyed trying to find

creative new ways to connect superintendents to GCSAA's industry partners.

"The (GCSAA) members are the cornerstone to the success and playability of a course. The main reason you go to a golf course is for the golf course itself, whether the clubhouse is nice or in a trailer," Bisbing says. "I always challenged the term 'unseen heroes.' I always wanted them to be seen heroes. They're definitely under-recognized for the work they perform." ■

Editor's note: A longer version of this story originally appeared on the Golfdom blog, www.golfdom.blogspot.com.



Esoda joins Georgia HOF

awards from multiple industry organizations. He won the GCSAA Distinguished Service Award in 2009. In 2004 he won a GCSAA Excellence in Government Relations Award for his advocacy over golf course water rights. Indicative of how far-reaching the impact of his work on water rights and conservation has been was the fact golf professionals also gave him their highest honor with the Georgia PGA Section's Distinguished Service Award.

Esoda's colleagues — both superintendents and Atlanta CC co-workers — made a strong showing at the event. Included in that group was GCSAA president Robert Randquist, CGCS, who made the trip from south Florida.

"They gave me about three minutes to speak, but I took about 10," Esoda laughs. "I was able to tell the world about some of the good things our organizations do, and I was able to recognize all the good folks, the non-whiners."

Esoda has spent the past 20 years at Atlanta CC, where he has hosted seven PGA Tour events. He is a past president of the Georgia GCSA and serves on or has served the Georgia Allied Golf Council, Georgia Golf Environmental Foundation, Georgia State Golf Association, Georgia State Golf Foundation, Georgia Turfgrass Association and Georgia Turfgrass Foundation Trust. ■

Mark Esoda, certified superintendent at Atlanta Country Club in Marietta, Ga., now has his name forever etched in the membership of the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame.

Esoda was one of four inductees welcomed to the Hall at a ceremony in front of about 400 golf industry representatives. He joins Palmer Maples Jr., a past president of the GCSAA, as the only two superintendents in the Georgia Hall of Fame.

"When the executive director of the Georgia State Golf Association first came to me (with the news), I thought he just wanted to talk about the golf course," Esoda says. "Then he handed me the press release about the announcement. I couldn't believe it."

Esoda is one of the profession's best-known and well-respected superintendents, having been honored at state and national levels with top

