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Gregg Breningmeyer: *Dad Taught Me to Maintain Integrity*

BY LARRY AYLWARD

Everette Breningmeyer taught his son Gregg plenty about living a worthy life. But one of Everette's teachings hit home more than the others with Gregg. It focused on integrity.

"He taught me that you have to maintain integrity above all else," says Gregg, director of marketing and sales for John Deere Golf & Turf One Source. "If you lose your integrity, you lose everything."

Integrity is defined as a "firm adherence to a code or standard of values." Breningmeyer says his 74-year-old dad lives the definition.

Gregg, who grew up in Oak Park, Ill., is close to his father, even though they live apart (Gregg near Raleigh, N.C., and Everette near Atlanta). They speak weekly.

As a kid, Breningmeyer says he learned a few of life's lessons the hard way. That's because he might get himself into a jam and try to get himself out of it without owning up to being wrong. Everette, who still works as a psychologist, told his son that he had to fess up to his mistakes, no matter how difficult or embarrassing that was.

Gregg says he learned from his dad that it takes guts to admit you're wrong, but you feel better for it. "Then it's over, and you move on," he adds.

Integrity intertwines with credibility, Gregg believes, and credibility is about trust. In his relationships with distributors, Gregg realizes he needs their trust.

"If I don't have the trust of our distributors, One Source would never happen," Gregg says. "Our distributors must trust that we'll do what we say we're going to do."

Breningmeyer says his father also taught him it's vital to trust others to gain their respect. Gregg's philosophy is to trust the people he oversees and not micromanage them. "I let them do their jobs."

If you've ever met Breningmeyer, you know he's approachable. He's the type of guy who treats the janitor of a company with the same respect as the CEO. He's friendly and outgoing.

Breningmeyer says integrity pertains to self-esteem. He believes that an outgoing person is most likely a confident person.



Gregg Breningmeyer (second from left) with his dad Everette (standing) and sons Josh (left) and Zac

Interestingly, Everette, recognizing that his son was an extrovert, advised him to go into sales. Gregg couldn't thank him enough for that. "I love what I'm doing," he says convincingly.

Gregg's respect for his father is infinite. As the father of an 18-year-old son, Gregg jokes he can empathize with Everette about the challenges that come with raising a teen-ager.

"The older I get the more I appreciate him," Gregg says.

One thing is for: Like his dad did for him, Gregg will teach his son the value of integrity. He's already begun. ■



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Mike Hughes:

Dad Taught Me About Parental Support

BY LARRY AYLWARD

In his early 30s, Mike Hughes announced he was chucking his career as a litigation lawyer and going back to school to earn a master's degree in sports management. Hughes sold his house and car, packed up with his pregnant wife and young daughter and moved to Athens, Ohio, to attend Ohio University.

"I went from having a substantial income to having zero income," Hughes says.

Needless to say, his decision floored some of Hughes' friends and family members. And then there was his dad, Arthur.

"My dad was extremely supportive of me," the 48-year-old Hughes says. "In fact, he was the most supportive person of all the people around me. It meant a lot."

His father's reaction taught Hughes the importance of

parental support. Arthur knew Mike was tired of the law business after 10 years and wanted to pursue his dream, which was to work in the golf business.

"He was really encouraged by the fact that I wasn't going to accept less than something that I really wanted to do," Mike says.

Mike wasn't surprised of his father's reaction. His dad was always in his and his twin brother's corners growing up in Charleston, S.C.

"He would always tell us, 'Whatever you want to do, you can do,'" Hughes remembers. "He'd say it was just a matter of applying ourselves. He was always supportive and proud of us when we achieved anything."

That includes when Hughes was named executive director of the fledgling National Golf Course Owners

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Mike Hughes (standing, right) with father Arthur and twin brother Arthur

Association (NGCOA) in 1990. Hughes was the first full-time employee the association hired.

The NGCOA, located in Charleston, unveiled its new headquarters a few years ago, and Arthur was there to celebrate the day with his son.

"Parental support makes a difference," Hughes says. "I don't think people ever outgrow it."

Hughes has three children — two girls ages 17 and 14, and a 13-year-old boy. Like his father, Hughes strives to encourage to his children. "I support them and let them know that they have the capabilities to follow their dreams," he says.

It's vital that parents instill confidence in their children by supporting their endeavors, Hughes says. "It makes them want to try things that they might not otherwise want to do," he adds.

Arthur is a World War II veteran. A member of the 82nd Airborne, he was wounded in Holland and sent to England to recover. A few weeks later, he participated in the famous Battle of the Bulge.

"He's a tough guy, but he's a nice guy, too," Hughes says. "He's very gentle on the outside."

After retiring from the military, Arthur worked for the civil service at the naval supply center in Charleston. He lives alone in the same house where he raised his family, about 15 minutes from Mike. Father and son see each other often and speak regularly. ■

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Andrea Bakalyar

Continued from page 25

her father rise daily to milk the cows at 5:30 a.m. When she says daily, she means *every* day.

"He never took a day off sick that I can remember," Bakalyar recalls. "He expected the same from his children, and we followed him into the barns as soon as we were able. I learned you should be productive every minute, and his amazing work ethic inspired me."

It wasn't always work, however. Andrea says her dad also showed her how to enjoy life.

"He knew when to play," Bakalyar says. "Dad always had time for the kids."

John's community involvement, however, stands as the lesson Bakalyar holds nearest to her heart. He opens his workshop to anyone with a project to do. He's a church councilman and resident caretaker for the congregation next door. He plows the neighborhood without payment when it snows.

Everyone knows John in Upperco, Md., and they genuinely *like* him. Bakalyar watched her father create a network of friends with his love and kindness that serves him to this day as a support system during difficult times. She vows to do the same in her life.

"When you grow up in that environment, it leaves a strong

"My father strives each day to be a little bit better than he was before. That's the kind of legacy I want to leave, too."

Andrea Bakalyar

impression," Bakalyar says. "You learn that you shouldn't do for others with the expectation of something in return. You should serve others because it's the right thing to do, and they will often return that kindness in most unexpected ways.

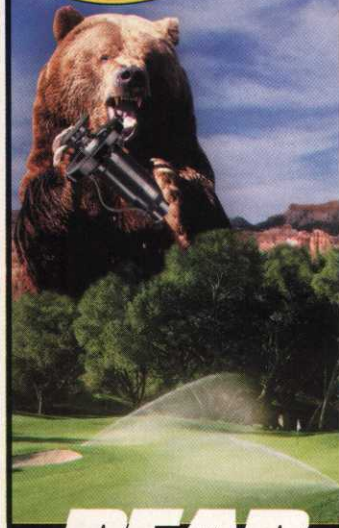
"My father strives each day to be a little bit better than he was before," Bakalyar says warmly. "That's the kind of legacy I want to leave, too." ■

Tell Us About Your Dad

Goldfom would like to know a story about how your dad influenced you to be the person you are. Send an e-mail to Editor Larry Aylward at larylward@advanstar.com to share your story. We'll print responses in either the magazine or online.



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Michaud

HAS MADE HIS Mark

Down-to-earth superintendent thought he reached his career pinnacle at Pebble Beach. But then he came to Shinnecock Hills, site of this month's U.S. Open

**STORY AND PHOTOS
BY LARRY AYLWARD,
EDITOR**

His first day on the job at Grand Cypress Golf Club in 1984, Mark Michaud pulled reeds out of a pond bank. It was a dirty and daring duty. The 23-year-old stood up to his knees in murky water. A swarm of slimy snakes swam about while menacing alligators lurked nearby.

But the unflappable Michaud, the new greenkeeper at the Orlando golf course, didn't vacate the pond or the premises. He went about his job — *enjoying* it.

"I remember thinking to myself, I wouldn't want to be doing anything else," Michaud recalls 20 years later while sitting in his cluttered office

at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y., where he's the superintendent. "It was just awesome. I loved it."

During that time in the pond, Michaud knew he had found his niche in life — golf course maintenance and management.

"Every day I went to work, I'd stay there from light until dark," Michaud says in his gruff voice. "I just loved being on the golf course."

On this day, a cool spring morning in April, Michaud reminisces about his career and talks about the people who helped him get to where he is today. This month, the



43-year-old Michaud will reach a career pinnacle when Shinnecock hosts the 2004 U.S. Open Championship.

Michaud appears relaxed as he slumps in a black leather chair with his legs crossed. Some superintendents dress like golfers, but not the burly Michaud. He wears blue rain pants, a blue jacket and duck shoes. His tan baseball cap features the Shinnecock Hills Indian logo and reads, "2004 U.S. Open."

Michaud's round face is tan and weathered and looks a tad weary — understandable for a man who's been busy readying his golf course for one of the nation's greatest sporting events. Michaud's big, blue-green eyes command your attention. During a long conversation, he removes his hat often and runs his large, coarse hands through a shock of curly, black hair tinted by a touch of gray.

Michaud has a sharp wit, enjoys telling stories (ask him if he has any deer-hunting tales) and loves to laugh. He's one of those people whose jovial laugh — a low, raspy cackle — is itself funny and makes other people laugh.

It was a homecoming of sorts when Michaud arrived at Shinnecock Hills in January 2000 from the Monterey Peninsula in California. He grew up in Rochester, N.Y., about a seven-hour drive from eastern Long Island.

In California, where he spent seven years, Michaud rose through the ranks at the Pebble Beach Co. He was assistant superintendent for four months at Pebble Beach Golf Links before being named superintendent, a post he held for 3.5 years. Then he was named agronomist/superintendent for all four courses under the Pebble Beach umbrella.

Pebble Beach was a great experience, but Michaud says the job drained him. The resort is open daily, and every tee time is always booked. Michaud rarely had a day off and remembers cutting cups on Christmas mornings. Pebble Beach got to be a grind.

"When I was home, I'd think about the course all the time," Michaud says. "I'd dream about the course when asleep."



The time at the company ripped by — three years, four years, five years.

"It went by so fast," Michaud says. "It was a treadmill. You can only do it for so long."

On top of that, Michaud says California is a "tremendously expensive" place to live. So is Southampton, but Michaud is making more money at Shinnecock.

Michaud says he loved his job at Pebble Beach, but it just burned him out. "I made a lot of great friends there, and I miss them dearly."

Don't misunderstand him — Michaud didn't leave Pebble Beach because he doesn't like to work long hours. In fact, he subscribes to the work-hard and play-hard lifestyle. But the difference between the Pebble Beach and Shinnecock jobs is that Michaud *has* time to play in his current role. He's an avid hunter and fisherman. He'll tell you that hooking a 15-pound striper from the Atlantic Ocean is as exhilarating as birdieing the par-3 seventh at Shinnecock, one of his favorite holes on the William Flynn-designed course.

Continued on page 40

Michaud (left) confers with assistant superintendent Brian Goleski. "There's a handful of really good superintendents out there, and Mark is one of them," Goleski says.

"I'd stay there from light until dark. I just loved being on the golf course." — Mark Michaud

Michaud Has Made His Mark

Continued from page 39

After graduating from high school, Michaud thought he wanted to be a toolmaker, and he took a job as an apprentice. But Michaud noticed something distinctive about the veteran toolmakers he met — none of them had all 10 fingers.

He ditched that profession and took a job for a company that manufactured computers for AT&T. But after the AT&T breakup in 1984, the company folded and Michaud lost his job.

At 23, Michaud and his buddy packed up their belongings and moved to Orlando. They worked various construction jobs to pay the rent and eat. One day, Michaud scanned the want ads, saw an ad for a greenkeeper at Grand Cypress Golf Club and applied for the post.

"I got the job, not knowing they would take anybody they could off the street just to get the work done," he says with a self-effacing chuckle.

Michaud also didn't know at the time that his life was about to change. He hit it off with Tom Alex, director of golf course maintenance at Grand Cypress, and says his boss was a great teacher. Michaud worked at Grand Cypress for nearly a year.

"He was the type of guy you could give any assignment to," Alex recalls. "I'd say, 'Mark, get in there with those snakes and alligators.' He'd laugh and say, 'OK.'"

Alex, recognizing how much Michaud relished the profession, suggested he pursue an education in the field. So Michaud went home to New York to attend the State University of New York (SUNY) in Cobleskill. He worked as a greenkeeper at Rochester Country Club while going to school. Michaud was 28 when he graduated from SUNY with a two-year degree in ornamental turfgrass management.

He took an internship at Oak Hill Country Club in 1988-89 and helped prepare the course for the U.S. Open in

1989. The experience electrified him. "I thought it was the greatest thing I'd ever seen," Michaud says. "I knew then that I wanted to have my own U.S. Open someday."

Shortly after the 1989 U.S. Open, Michaud landed a job as assistant superintendent at the Monroe Golf Club in Pittsford, N.Y., where he spent three years. Then it was on to Pebble Beach, where Michaud gained much tournament experience with the annual AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. He also headed preparations for Pebble Beach's U.S. Open in 2000.

It was difficult for Michaud to leave Pebble Beach for Shinnecock, especially six months before the course's U.S. Open was to be held. But Michaud, his wife and two kids longed to move back east. Shinnecock wasn't exactly a comedown, and Michaud knew he couldn't pass up the opportunity.

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