

## WGCSA 25 and 50 Year Members

### Pat Zurawski- 25 Year member

Pat grew up in the Racine area working on a produce farm where developed his love of working outside. After high school Pat attended UW-Madison starting with a major in Pre Veterinary Science.

He worked his second summer at college for Monroe Miller at Blackhawk CC. He left school for awhile to work at Racine CC and returned to UW-Madison to finish school and worked with Monroe as an assistant for four years.

The first year as assistant was the first year in the WGCSA and the year he married his lobster, Jackie. They have two children, Katie and Sam. Pat got his first Golf Course Superintendent Job at Reedsburg CC, and served the club for 11 years.

Wanting a change, he found "clicked" with Lee Merkel and moved to The Golf Club at Camelot in February 2002 and has been there since.

### Tom Merkel - 25 Year Member

Tom started working for his father, Lee Merkel, in 1982 at Lakeside GC in Pewaukee, WI during the summertime. His father purchased Willow Run GC in 1987 and Tom started working full-time there with his uncle, Don Shaffer, until 1994.

Unfortunately, his uncle Don passed away a year ago and sadly would have received his 25 year service award this year also.

In 1994, Tom became the Golf Course Superintendent/owner at West Bend Lakes GC. West Bend Lakes GC was a 9 hole course when first purchased but construction commenced in 1999 to expand the course to 18 holes and the course opened at 18 holes in 2000.

Tom currently resides in Fillmore, WI with his wife Deb and son Zachariah.

### DuWayne Laak CGCS - 50 Year Member

Dewey grew up in the Waukesha as a child. At 13 years of age he delivered papers and got his first golf club job at Moore Downs GC setting sprinklers. He rode his bike at night pulling hoses and enjoyed himself thoroughly.

Back then fungicides were mixed in a wash tub and applied with a sprinkling can. When he was a senior in high school was given the opportunity to be the golf course superintendent. Dewey chose to attend UW-Madison and pursue a Landscape Architecture degree. He attended two years and changed to the 2 year Turf Management Program at Penn State, finishing in 1963 with a GCSAA scholarship award.

He bought some farm land with his father in 1967 and started Kettle Moraine GC. Dewey used his education and became the man of many hats. He was designer, builder, and superintendent at Kettle Moraine GC. He opened 6 holes his first year, but in 1970 he opened the first 9 holes.

He started the back 9 and completed 5 holes. This allowed golfers to play the front 9, and then the back 9 twice. "One hole free" was his selling slogan back in the mid 70's. By 1978 the entire course was open.

Dewey did shaping work at Deer Track GC in Oconomowoc and partnered with Lee Merkel at Willow Run GC and helped with the drainage work. Dewey helped start the Wisconsin Golf Course Owners Association and was the President for 5 years.

He also served on the board of the WTA in the late 80's which he helped raised money for the OJ Noer building. If that was not enough, he was a board member of the Wisconsin State Golf Association.

Through all of this he still found time to attend WGCSA meetings and staying in touch with superintendents which he loved dearly. Dewey sold his investments in Willow Run and Kettle Moraine in the early 90's. He then retired and walked away from golf for awhile.

The industry "pulled" him back in the mid/late 90's where he helped do remodeling at West Bend Lakes and The Golf Club at Camelot. He was asked to help oversee the building of Minocqua CC. Dewey and his wife Jan reside in Minocqua in the summers and he serves on MCC's greens committee. Dewey winters in Fort Meyers Fl where he tries his best to just golf.

Sons Brian and Doug grew up at Kettle Moraine GC, and continued in the golf business for a number of years. Brian gravitated toward the hospitality side, and Doug became a golf course superintendent.

Doug served at Chippewa Valley GC, West Bend Lakes Golf Club, and The Golf Club At Camelot. Experience with every brand of irrigation system, led him to sales with Hunter Irrigation and then John Deere. He is currently working for a large Landscape maintenance in the Milwaukee area.

Dewey's most memorable superintendents meeting was at Autumn Ridge GC in April of 2002 when he had a heart attack following the golf round and taken by ambulance to Manitowoc. A stent was placed, and 10 years later still feeling great. Dewey is very thankful for all the friends in the golf industry who assisted him through out his career, and is looking forward to seeing a few of them at a meeting or two this summer.

*Editors Note: This piece on our 25 and 50 year members was provided by Scott Sann, Membership Chair for WGCSA and Golf Course Superintendent at Greenwood Hills CC.*

25 Year Members Pat Zurowski (left) and Tom Merkel (right) were on hand to receive their plaques.

Dewey Laak, CGCS Retired reached 50 years of membership was not able to attend and will be awarded his plaque at a summer meeting.



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