

*From Humble Beginning to World Class Facility*

# Ray Moris and Tartan Park Golf

By JACK KOLB  
MGCSA Life Member

Immediately after WWII Ray Moris busied himself milking a large herd of dairy cows. This means that you work each and every evening and then you are up early every morning with no days off, holidays and Sundays included. Like most young couples, Ray and Ceil (his wife) were looking for employment where they could have quality time with their two young children, daughter Audrey and infant son Joseph.

In 1947 an opportunity to manage 320 acres of land with a herd of Aberdeen Angus provided an escape from the 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. schedule of the dairy herd. The farm was owned by a wealthy individual who used it as an investment and hobby. The owner's private home was a 27-room mansion on the property. Thus Ray Moris and wife Ceil settled in as tenant farmers and quasi helpers to the wealthy family.

**The owners entertained lavishly.** Ray helped keep the yard free of snow and occasionally helped errant guests back onto the driveway after festive events. Among the guests were members of the top CEOs, XOs, VPs and CFOs of the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company.

There was a trend during the 1950s where large employee corporations began to provide recreation areas for their workers. Continental Machine Company had a beautiful area out in Credit River Township called "COMACHE" now named Cleary Lake. Honeywell started an area in Lakeville on Judicial Road now called Brackett's Crossing. These areas were for recreation of all employees, the highest to the lowest and not initially concentrating on golf.

Thus 3M was interested in providing picnic and recreation areas for their employees and began to negotiate with the owner of the Lake Elmo farm for whom Ray Moris worked. On May 10, 1959 3M executed the option to buy the farm and property for recreational purposes.

**One of the financial forces in providing employee recreational facilities** was the income derived from the many coin operated food and beverage dispensers located throughout the employer's plant. A young accountant by the name of Don Herfort was selected to set up a bookkeeping system for these monies and then, working with a committee, began planning and designing picnic areas, ball fields, ski areas and a bow-and-arrow target range.

The golf bug was not as common in the hourly employee as it was in the salaried group, but by 1962 some agitation for a golf course was in the making. Ray Moris in the meantime was busy cleaning up after picnickers, grooming ball



**RAY MORIS**

*Happy in his new "Superintendents Chair." October 1970*

fields, working nights on the ski slopes and pulling vehicles with their errant drivers from ditches and off-limit areas. Young son Joe Moris was working with his father and completing high school. In interviewing Ray Moris for this article it seemed that his largest headache was keeping people and cars confined to designated areas. Not all but many picnics became a little out of control and Ray was a virtual policeman as well as maintenance supervisor.

**Several architectural plans for golf courses** were submitted and after many agonizing hours of critiquing by members of a committee headed by Mr. Cy Pesek (at that time a VP at 3M), a plan by one of their own members, Don Herfort, was accepted. Construction of the golf course began in 1962 with the burden of supervisor, of the new course, resting on Ray Moris' shoulders.

Most of 1963 was spent in construction of the golf course now known as Tartan Park. Nine holes were opened for play in 1964. Ray Moris had gone through the transition of Dairy Farmer, Herdsman and now Construction Supervisor. Upon completion of the new 9-hole layout he faced the responsibility of being the golf course superintendent. This transition was rather shocking as he had not worked with such intensive and fastidious turf management in the past.

*(Continued on Page 7)*

## Ray Moris—

(Continued from Page 5)

An itinerant greenkeeper by the name of Walter Mann was hired as an interim superintendent to help Ray adjust to the new vocation. Young Joe Moris in the meantime had grown into manhood, spent time in the military and returned to work with his father.

Construction of a second nine began in 1965 and the combined 18 holes were ready for play in 1966. Also in 1966 Ray Moris and son Joe joined the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents' Association. A young man by the name of Jim Gunn became the Superintendent for the completed 18 holes until the year 1970 when Ray Moris with great confidence took over the reigns of Superintendent.

Ray Moris had guided the 320-acre Tartan Park through many transitions and in 1975 was given mandatory retirement at age 65. Ray has a home across the street from Tartan Park and at age 89 has kept what he calls "an eye on his baby." Ray Moris and wife Ceil celebrated 60 years of marriage June 14, 1999.

Second generation Joe Moris has taken over the "head of operations" mantel since his dad's retirement in 1975. There is little he hasn't witnessed from the inception of the project until the present. Other than a few years in military service Joe has seen the evolution of a 320-acre farm (plus another 163 acres for a total of 483 acres) into a "world class" recreational facility. Joe is responsible for the maint-



**THREE GENERALS AND A PRIVATE.** Left to right, Joe Moris taking instructions and leaning on his shovel, Ray Moris giving directions, Randy Allen working the shovel and Jim Gunn seems relieved that his sod cutter just ran out of gas.

enance of six ball fields, four of which are lighted, four picnic areas, an archery range, 12 tennis courts, four bocce ball courts, one conference center, an 18-hole golf course, plus a 9-hole regulation course completed in 1986, for a total of 27 holes.

*"Award Winning Quality"*

## CONCRETE CART PATHS

*6' - 7' - 8' - 10' wide  
26% inclines are possible*

*Reference list available*

# HOWREY

CONSTRUCTION

*For more information, contact*  
David Howrey • 820 W. High St., Rockwell City, Iowa 50579

## 712-297-8182