

GEORGE SANTANA, AVID GOLFER WHO BUILT MANAGED COURSES

For aging Santa Clara Valley golfers who struggle to keep their skills long enough to shoot their age, George Santana was an inspiration.

When he was in his 70's, he shot a 68 at the 18-hole Spring Valley Golf Course in the hills above Milpitas. On April 19, 1985, Mr. Santana shot an 80 - on his 80th birthday.

In 1987, at 82, he beat all the plus 50-year olds in the annual tournament of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America in Tucson, AZ, to win the seniors trophy.

But Mr. Santana didn't just play golf courses; he made them - and kept - and owned them. He made his mark on fairways and greens all over the Santa Clara Valley for nearly 50 years.

It started when he was a teenager and his father had a team of horses and an apricot orchard in the east foothills next to the San Jose Country Club. The greenskeeper for the club's golf course needed the horses to pull its mower; young George became the driver.

He stayed until 1946, rising to greenskeeper himself and then golf course superintendent.

Naturally he played - well enough to win trophies in city championships along the way.

In the late 1940's and 50's, Mr. Santana opened a driving range on Alum Rock Avenue and got into course design and construction - in Hollister, Bolado Park; San Jose, Cambrian Park, Santa Teresa and Almaden Country Club, where he was golf course superintendent for several years.

By the '60's, he had built his own course, the El Rancho Verde Golf Course on McKee road.

When George Santana retired and quit developing golf courses in the 1970's, he switched to developing people...and he played golf, at least three times a week with the Spring Valley foursome or the SIRS, or the Elks or the "course superintendents."

Editor's Note: Article seen in the April 23, 1992 San Jose Mercury News. The Distinguished Service Award given each year will now be named the George Santana Distinguished Award.

TWENTY FIVE YEAR PIN

The following members received their twenty five year pins at the Annual Meeting held April 27, 1992 held at Palo Alto Hills Country Club.

- Harkewal "Henry" Singh
- Joe Andrade
- Bill R. Menear
- John Flachman
- Michael R. Clark, CGCS
- Santokh "Sam" Singh
- John Engen\Kazu "Kaz" Maseba
- James D. Ross
- James Fred Mays
- James R. Bantrup

- C.W. "Chuck" Weatherton
- William C. Huff
- Billy Dean Osborn
- William H. Nigh, CGCS
- Mulkh "Roger" Raj, CGCS
- David E. Griffiths
- Dale Achondo
- W. A. "Mac" McGraw
- Donald R. Meyer
- Charles "Chuck" Mangold
- Raymon York
- Russell D. Mitchell
- Robert H. Wright
- Robert Muir Graves
- Robert J. Helwig, Sr.
- Joseph D. Sheffield

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