

2000 USGA GREEN SECTION AWARD RECIPIENT

PALMER MAPLES HONORED

"I've always been proud to be a golf course superintendent."

WITH THOSE simple words, L. Palmer Maples, Jr., CGCS, retired golf course superintendent from the Summit Chase Country Club in Snellville, Georgia, accepted the 2000 Green Section Award presented to him by John O'Neill of the USGA Executive Committee. Granted by a distinguished panel of experts in the turfgrass field, this annual award recognizes persons for distinguished contributions to golf through work with turfgrass. It was presented to Maples on February 19, 2000, at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Annual Conference and Show in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Maples family tree includes multiple generations involved in all aspects of the game of golf: golf course superintendents, golf professionals, and golf course architects. Palmer Maples' ancestors can be traced back to working with such legends as Old Tom Morris and Donald Ross. In accepting the award, Palmer said, "It is a great honor to have my name added to the list of people receiving this award. I hope I've made the Maples family proud."

Palmer started working on the golf course at the age of 12, and by the time he was 14 he knew his goal in life was to become a golf course superintendent. His first job was to put used

motor oil on sand greens and make them smooth. From there, he began to mow fairways and roughs, rake bunkers, and spread fertilizers.

He earned an associate degree in turfgrass management from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia. While attending school, he interned at Sea Island Golf Club (St. Simons Island, Georgia) and helped conduct field experiments with Tifgreen bermudagrass under the direction of renowned turfgrass scientist Dr. Glenn Burton. After serving two years in the Army he continued his education at the University of Georgia, earning a bachelor of science degree in agronomy.

His first job after completing his degree was to join the staff at Charlotte Country Club as assistant golf course superintendent, later being named the superintendent in 1959. Maples was one of the first superintendents in the South to convert bermudagrass greens to bentgrass. His career of over 38 years as a golf course superintendent also took him to The Standard Club (Atlanta, Georgia) from 1970 to 1976 and to Summit Chase Country Club from 1981 to 1997.

Palmer not only excelled at his career, but he also shared his wealth of knowledge and experience with legions of other golf course superintendents.

From 1967 to 1969 he was president of the Carolina Golf Course Superintendents Association. In 1975, he volunteered his time to lead the activities of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of American (GCSAA) as its president.

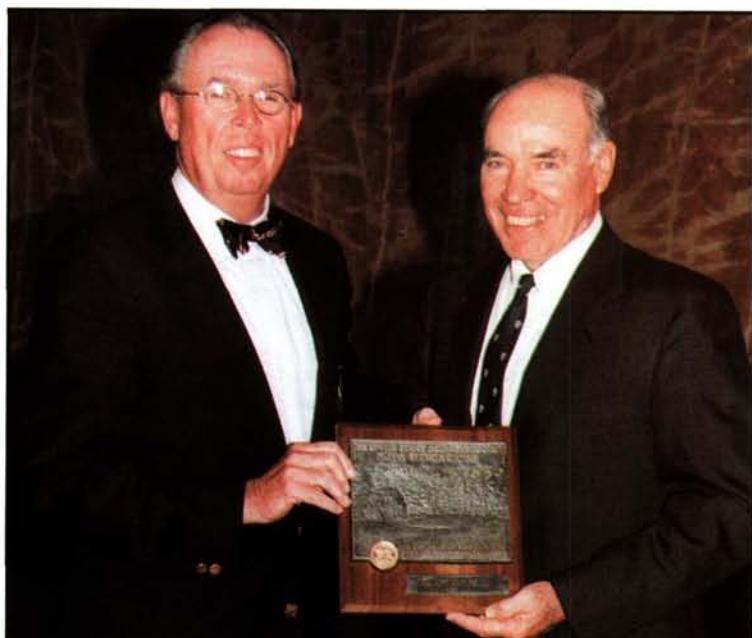
After his GCSAA presidency, he left The Standard Club to accept a GCSAA staff position as director of education, a position he held until 1980. He directly interacted with thousands of golf course superintendents as he developed conference educational programs and served as technical advisor to the GCSAA publication, *Golf Course Management* magazine. Palmer also served an instrumental role in developing the GCSAA's library of educational materials.

His love of the outdoors and agronomic challenges brought him back to his golf course superintendent role when he joined the Summit Chase Country Club in 1981. Until his retirement from the club in 1997, he remained active in both the GCSAA and the Georgia GCSA.

Throughout his career, Palmer shared his talents with many others as well as his employer. For many years, he volunteered his time to serve on the USGA Green Section Committee and the USGA Green Section Award Committee, and today he still actively serves on the GCSAA Historical Committee. He also is a member of the Donald Ross Society.

Palmer believes that golf course superintendents' willingness to share information is what has allowed them to progress so far in their careers. In retirement, he continues to share his wealth of knowledge and zest for the profession by teaching at Gwinnett Technical Institute, consulting with other golf courses, and speaking at meetings. One supporter wrote, "Your enthusiasm spreads like fire, and the students are not only academically trained, but also motivated."

When all things are added up, his lifetime contributions, particularly his dedication, service, and commitment to excellence, certainly demonstrate that Palmer Maples is a great example of someone who lives what he believes.



John O'Neill (left) presents Palmer Maples with the 2000 USGA Green Section Award.