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# 100 YEARS OF THE CPGA

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*AUGUST 2023*

## **Myrtle Beach Days**

**by Lee Pace**  
Author & Historian

Bay Tree Plantation opened with three courses in 1972, and the resort in North Myrtle Beach was on the early edge of the Grand Strand's explosion that took the area along the South Carolina coast from 10 golf courses through 1968 to adding 26 during the second half of the decade of the 1980s. Myrtle Beach golf operators, PGA professionals, hoteliers and promotional officials were creative and always on the lookout to take an initiative, helping the region grow into one of the nation's foremost golf destinations.

And so it was fitting that Bay Tree's owners in the mid-1970s offered the Carolinas PGA two acres of land across Hwy. 9 from its entrance to build a new headquarters building. Bay Tree's ownership group was named Carostrand and was composed of partners Howard Anderson, Skeets Bellamy, Bryan Floyd, Ed Martin and Gen. James Hackler. Floyd was also mayor of North Myrtle Beach and thought the CPGA headquarters was a perfect fit with 680,000 rounds of golf played in 1975 with an estimated \$34 million golf-related financial impact to the area.

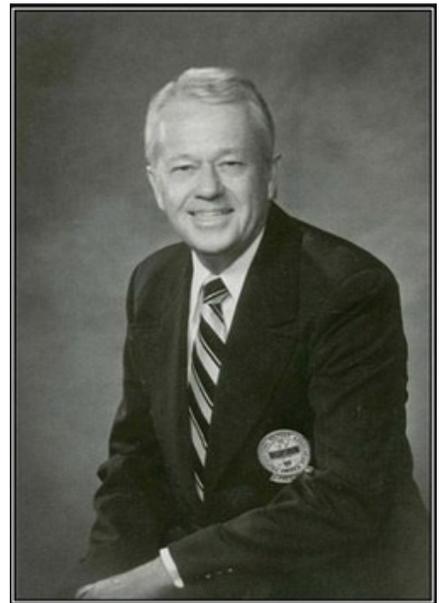
"Bay Tree offered us land across the street and in return hoped the section would host a lot of tournaments there at Bay Tree and in Myrtle Beach as a whole, which turned out to be true," says Gary

Schaal, who was head pro at Pine Lakes International at the time and later served as CPGA and national PGA president.

The new building was dedicated in May 1976, shortly after John Derr replaced Jack Horner as the CPGA's second full-time executive director. Steve Shabala was hired as the tournament director and became the CPGA's second full-time employee.

"It is no accident that we have a fine building here," Derr said at the grand opening. "We have always thought that our office should be in the Grand Strand. After many years of having office space in Durham, actually coming here was generated by the owners of Bay Tree."

Henry Poe, national PGA president and a native of Durham, wired to say, "Congratulations on having your own building. It has to be the best in the country, since yours is the only section to have its own building."



*Henry Poe*

Tommy Card, the head pro at Carolina Country Club in Raleigh and the CPGA secretary, said the cost of the building came in at just under \$120,000, five percent below estimates. The 1976 CPGA schedule featured nine major events, three of them at Grand Strand courses.

Derr presided over the CPGA's first decade in North Myrtle Beach. When he retired at the end of 1985, Jim Hart was elevated to executive director after four years as Derr's top associate and would lead the organization for 14 years.

Hart's tenure spanned the exponential growth of golf through the 1980s boom and up to the turn of the century. This era saw the explosion of the private, gated golf community as well as daily fee courses in resort areas. The golf equipment and apparel businesses grew and innovated as well to keep up with more golfers playing and demanding livelier balls and high-tech equipment.

That added more to the daily responsibilities of the golf

professional.

“There was quite an evolution of the golf professional’s job in the latter part of the 1900s,” says Hart, today the general manager at Cedar Rock Country Club in Lenoir, N.C.. “When I took over, there were guys like Stuart Taylor and Randy Glover whose employers said, ‘If it’s on the schedule, you’re playing.’ And we had a lot of guys who were very, very strong players. Bob Boyd won everything we had, and he played on the PGA Tour. We had over 100 pro-am events, and the playing aspect of the golf professional’s job was far more important than it seems to be today. So it was very active. We had the premier tournament program in the nation at that time.

“Over time, the owner-operators and the club boards told the pro, ‘We want you running the golf shop, taking care of the members, running the tournaments.’ Playing became less and less important, they didn’t care as much that their pro won the state open.”

The growth of the Carolinas Section and new competitions put the onus on Hart to hire sharp young tournament administrators and rules officials, and today he takes pride looking back at some hires and what key staff members have gone on to accomplish in golf after working for the Section in the 1980s and into the ‘90s:

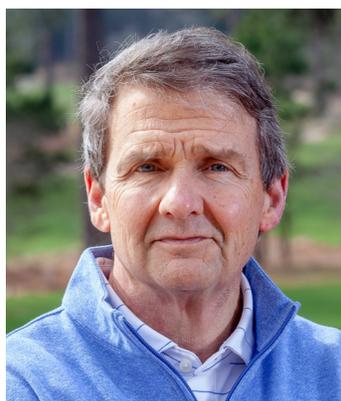
Jim Duncan was assistant executive director and worked for the Carolinas PGA for 11 years before moving to the PGA Tour and becoming VP of Rules, Competition & Administration; Steve Wilmot graduated to a long career running the Heritage Classic at Hilton Head; Darrell Crall left the Carolinas Section to work for PGA National administration; John Kaczowski became president of the Western Golf Association; and Mark Harrison became executive director of the Northern Texas PGA Section.

“Our staff was really solid, and we had to have good people to handle all the work,” Hart says. “We grew the percentage of clubs that employed PGA professionals, which was a sense of pride. I was proud of the numbers that we had and the tournament program that we had. I

was proud of the numbers that we had and the tournament program that we had. I was proud of the fact that our dues remained among the lowest in the PGA. I felt like we provided a lot of value to the members. Our tournament program was really exceptionally good—very popular and events would over-fill and we'd have to get extra golf courses.

“Our education program was outstanding as well. Our winter seminar was attended by three or four hundred golf professionals and we had really the best speakers and teachers. Sam Snead spoke one year, David Leadbetter, Phil Rodgers—I could go on and on with the top teachers in the country and the education programs we presented.”

Hart left the Carolinas PGA in 1999 on the cusp of significant change. The era of meteoric growth for the sport of golf transitioned into a global recession in the early 2000s and a retrenchment of the peak of some 120 courses in the Grand Strand. That would set up the next era of the Carolinas PGA.



**LEE PACE** is a Chapel Hill-based golf writer who has written about the history, architecture and great golfers of the Carolinas over four decades. He has written more than a dozen club histories and in 2021 released along with UNC Press his book, "Good Walks--Rediscovering the Soul of Golf at 18 Top Carolinas Courses."

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**PGA**

Carolinas Section

**100 YEARS**

★ 1923-2023 ★