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# 100 YEARS OF THE CPGA

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*Construction site of CPGA Headquarters - Bryan Park*

*OCTOBER  
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## **Moving to Greensboro**

**by Lee Pace**  
Author & Historian

The Carolinas PGA Section moved out of its offices in Myrtle Beach in November 2011 for the move to its new headquarters in Greensboro. The landmark occasion ended eight years of the Section casting about for a home that was more centrally located to all of the Carolinas and in a community that offered the potential for more robust sponsorship support.

It began in 2003 when Kelly Childs, the Director of Golf at the Country Club of Sapphire Valley in the North Carolina mountains, made another six-hour drive to CPGA headquarters in North Myrtle Beach for a board meeting.

“It was quite a long drive,” he says. “I wondered how many others were inconvenienced and thought there might be a more central location for our Section headquarters.”

He also observed that while the Grand Strand area was certainly a hotbed for the traveling golfer with more than 100 courses at the time, the overall business community wasn’t broad enough to provide a



*Carolinas PGA HQ Sign at Grande Dunes in North Myrtle Beach*

There's a lot of cache to the brand.

"I thought we were valuable enough that we might be able to acquire a location in a more fertile business environment, and it would not cost the Section anything," Childs says. "I wrote a white paper and drilled down into what the true value of the Section was."

Schmid remembers a board meeting in 2003.

"Kelly was the one who said, 'You know, there's a lot of value in the PGA. There's a lot of value in what we bring to someone,'" Schmid says. "We need to find somebody who understands what our value is and what we can bring to them and their community."

Zack Veasey, the Section president in 2002-03, agreed and appointed Childs to head a task force to explore options.

That initiative coincided with Schmid being approached by the director of a new hospital next door to Section headquarters off Hwy. 9 in North Myrtle Beach with the overture that the hospital would soon likely be interested in acquiring the land on which the CPGA headquarters sat for facility expansion. That indeed happened, with the CPGA selling the land to McLeod Health Loris in 2006 and two years later moving into a temporary building at Grande Dunes Resort while it

steady flow of sponsorship dollars to the Section's major championships and its annual trade show. Childs also thought that the very name of the PGA of America carried substantial weight and that a regional chapter of the national trade group for club professionals would be coveted by any number of communities.

Ron Schmid, the Executive Director of the CPGA, liked to say the PGA was like General Motors and its sections were like GM dealerships.

studied its options.

Schmid, Childs and the relocation committee began its due diligence. Several factions in Myrtle Beach wanted the CPGA to stay where it was, and there were potential options at the Surf Club, Grande Dunes and Barefoot Resort. But the prevailing thought was to move Section headquarters closer to the middle of the two Carolinas, and the committee visited Charlotte, Camden, Rock Hill, Pinehurst/Southern Pines and Greensboro.

“I marched those officers around time after time to different places to do our presentation of what the value of having a PGA Section could be for their community, their facility or whatever the case may be,” Schmid says.

“We developed a presentation and showed it to a lot of people,” says Childs, now retired after a 26-year tenure at Sapphire Valley. “But we didn’t get any takers. We weren’t as valuable as we thought we were. We almost decided to let it go and move on.

“But Rick Murphy wouldn’t let it go.”

Murphy lived in Greensboro, was director of golf at Greensboro National and operated the Rick Murphy Golf Academy. He was just coming off his tenure as CPGA president in 2006 when the Section needed to make a decision. Murphy thought from the beginning when the idea of Section relocation was broached that Greensboro was the

perfect location. He was well-connected to many power brokers in Greensboro’s rich sports community and began marshaling support. He talked to Jim Melvin, a former



*Carolinas PGA HQ Sign at Bryan Park in Greensboro*

Greensboro mayor, the president of the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation and a key leader through many years of the Greater Greensboro Open, which in 2007 became the Wyndham Championship. He talked to the Koury Corporation, the owner of the Grandover Resort with its 36-hole golf facility. He visited with leaders of the Greensboro Sports Council, a support group for the Greensboro Coliseum, and the Greensboro Sports Foundation, the local organizing committee for Greensboro sporting events. He drafted friend and attorney Marc Isaacson in helping write legal documents and projecting the financial arrangements.



*Completed Carolinas PGA HQ at Bryan Park in Greensboro*

“Jim Melvin was very supportive of the idea,” Murphy says. “The Bryan Foundation believed the Section would fit very well in the Greensboro sports community. The community was ecstatic at the idea of having the Section headquarters move here. They realized the economic impact it would have with the annual meeting here.”



*CPGA Professionals Kelly Childs, Karl Kimball, & Mike Casto celebrating the Bryan Park HQ Dedication*

The Bryan Foundation, which owns and operates Bryan Park Golf & Conference Center and its 36-hole golf facility north of downtown, offered 3.1 acres near the Bryan Park clubhouse and a deal of \$1 a year lease for 40 years. The CPGA could then use the

proceeds from the sale of its Myrtle Beach headquarters to build its new headquarters building.

“It all came together,” Murphy says. “We took an agreement to the board on a platter, saying this is an opportunity to join hands with a sports city that sees value in having us here. We have a unique homesite for the Carolinas PGA. There are 41 sections, and it would be hard to find one that has a better facility and a better location.”

Design and construction began on a 5,000 square-foot office building that included offices for nine staff members to work around a central conference room.

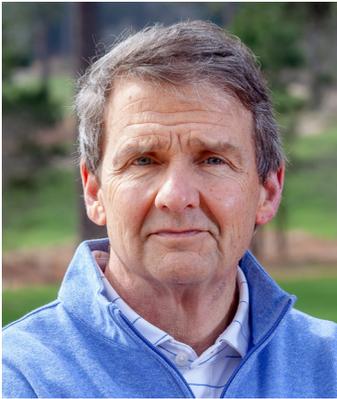


*Carolinas PGA Board Members Dedicate Section HQ on April 23, 2012*

The idea for one feature was borrowed from the Mid-Atlantic Section—having four bedrooms, each with a private bath, on a second floor that interns could use during the tournament season and officers could use when visiting Greensboro for board meetings in the off-season. The CPGA staff moved from Myrtle Beach in late 2011, and a grand opening was held on April 23, 2012.

The Carolinas PGA after nearly a century of operation now had a headquarters building designed specifically for its use and located at a premium golf facility. And it came full-circle to its roots, with Bryan Park located eight miles from Greensboro Country Club, where the first organizing meeting of the Section was held in May 1923.

“It was just very fulfilling to see it all come together,” Schmid says. “It was a perfect fit. And it was fitting that the Section came back to where it all started.”



**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 ★