
100 YEARS OF THE CPGA



*Golf Professionals Henry Poe, Gary Schaal,
& Don Padgett Sr. 1988*

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Carolinas Roots Run Deep in National PGA

by Lee Pace
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A pair of native born Tar Heels and three transplants from the Midwest who made significant marks in the golf industry at Pinehurst and along the South Carolina coast have served as presidents of the PGA of America.

Henry Poe 1975-76, Don Padgett Sr. 1977-78, Gary Schaal 1993-94, Will Mann 1999-2000 and Roger Warren 2005-06 led the national PGA during a three-decade period when the Ryder Cup grew from near extinction to one of the most renowned sporting events in the world and the game across the Carolinas and the nation grew exponentially.

In addition, former University of North Carolina golfer Suzy Whaley was elected national president in 2018-20.

The two natives were both from Durham — Poe and Mann.

Poe grew up playing Hillandale Golf Course, where his father was the professional, and was known as a young golfer in the 1930s for driving the green of the 408-yard ninth hole, a feat he modestly pointed out was accomplished on a hard summer fairway with a stiff wind at his



Henry Poe, PGA

back. He notched a Hillandale course record with a 61 in 1936. Poe played the pro tour for several years and later became a club pro at Winged Foot Golf Club and Reading (Pa.) Country Club before moving to Alabama in 1966 to build and manage three golf courses. He retired to High Point in 1984.

in 1966. He played golf sparingly as a youth but liked being around the game while working on the maintenance crew for Hillandale pro and general manager Luke Veasey. Mann landed a job out of college as superintendent at Hope Valley Country Club, and the die for a career in golf was cast.

He worked as a superintendent through the 1970s at clubs in Myrtle Beach and Chapel Hill and then as club manager, superintendent and pro at Roxboro Country Club. Mann became a full member of the PGA in 1979 and then bought a course in Graham, N.C., in 1985 and ushered Quarry Hills from the brink of bankruptcy to financial success. Mann worked his way up through PGA

Mann has Hillandale roots as well. He grew up in Durham, played football at N.C. State University and graduated with a degree in Forestry



Will Mann, PGA

administrative circles and was president in 1999-2000.

The Carolinas' riches of golf courses have long drawn golfers from the Midwest to play in the mountains, along the coast and in the historic Sandhills, and that same appeal worked for golf professionals as well.

Schaal grew up in Ohio and landed in the Carolinas when stationed in Myrtle Beach in the Air Force in the 1960s. He and Mann were early in their golf careers at Myrtle Beach National in the early 1970s, and Schaal later became part owner of four Myrtle Beach area golf courses—Deer Track, Indigo Creek, Wicked Stick and Diamond Back—as well as a developer of courses in Michigan, Texas and Virginia. He was PGA president in 1993-94.

Don Padgett Sr. was an Indiana native and made his mark as a club pro in the Hoosier state, but his second act had a major impact on golf in the Carolinas.

Padgett was a three-time president of the Indiana PGA from 1959 to 1970



Will Mann, PGA & Gary Schaal, PGA 1993

and was named PGA Golf Professional of the Year in 1961. He worked his way up the PGA national board in the 1970s, and he and Poe were instrumental in the mid-to-late 1970s to work with golfers like Jack Nicklaus and the European PGA to expand what had been a team comprised of golfers from Great Britain and Ireland to include those from all of Europe for the biennial Ryder Cup matches. That change in 1979 allowed golfers like Seve Ballesterous of Spain and Bernhard

Langer of Germany to compete against the Americans and turned the match into the ultra-competitive event we know today.

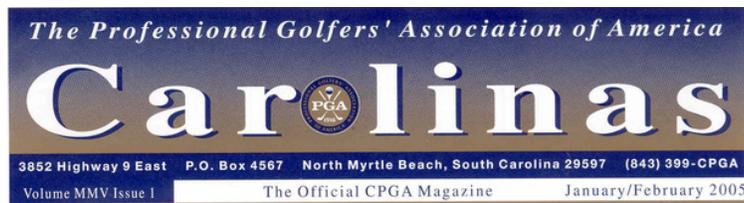
Padgett was director of golf at Desert Highlands in Palm Springs, Calif., when he got a call from Pinehurst CEO Pat Corso in 1987 asking if Padgett would be interested in moving to Pinehurst, taking over the

golf operation and helping the resort's efforts to put the resort and its renowned No. 2 course back in the competitive rotation of major championship golf. Padgett accepted the challenge and his contacts, reputation and outreach helped the resort land the Tour Championship of the PGA Tour in 1991-92, the U.S. Senior Open in 1994 and first of what would become multiple U.S. Opens in 1999.



Don Padgett Sr., PGA

Warren followed a similar path. He grew up in Galesburg, Ill., and played soccer at Western Illinois University, where he majored in Physical Education, then pursued his love of golf to enter the business



ROGER WARREN ELECTED AS 34th PGA PRESIDENT

On November 6, 2004 Roger Warren was sworn in as the 34th president of the PGA of America. The Director of Golf at the Kiawah Island Resort started his career in the Illinois Section prior to coming to the Carolinas in April of 2003. During his time as Vice President, Roger was the key architect in revamping the PGA educational system (Membership Service Requirement, otherwise known as MSR). During Roger's two years as president, he will champion efforts on education and initiatives like the Golf Certified Professional Program, which will be the foundation of the educational program. The program, which identifies six career paths that 98% of golf professionals choose, allows members to take a pre-test to measure the knowledge in their career track. Results identify areas of deficiency, enabling participants to complete coursework that targets those needs before taking the official test. Then, the user can go to a career center and take the official test for PGA Certification, confident of his prospects for success. This program will be the cornerstone of marketing PGA



January 2005 Carolinas PGA Magazine announcing Roger Warren, PGA as 34th PGA President

in 1985. He was director of golf at Illinois facilities for nearly two decades and was hired in 2003 to come south and run the golf operation at Kiawah Island Resort. He was national PGA President two years later when he was promoted to run the entire resort at Kiawah, and among

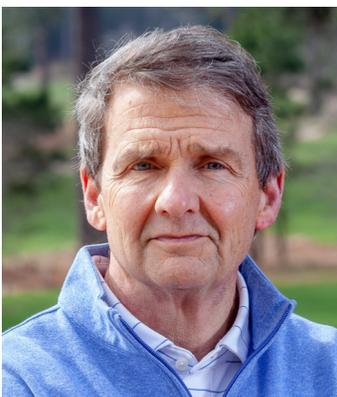
his career milestones at Kiawah has been overseeing the resort having the Ocean Course as the venue for two PGA Championships—the 2012 event won by Rory McIlroy and the 2021 championship won by Phil Mickelson.

Warren takes pride in Kiawah having hosted the one Ryder Cup and two PGAs and being accessible to everyone who watches the events on television or buys a badge to join the gallery.

“I do have a bias, but I strongly believe the PGA Championship should be played at public-access facilities,” he says. “It allows those people who are supporting the game financially to experience a great major championship venue, and that always can’t happen if it’s held at a private club.”

Among the five CPGA members who have risen to the national presidency, four of them at some point in their career have been course owners or at the top of the leadership chain running an entire club or resort. Warren believes the skills acquired coming along as a club professional and having to develop skills in service, teaching, merchandising, marketing, retailing and basic intrapersonal relationships served him well in nearly two decades running Kiawah.

“I’ve always felt that the PGA member was perfectly positioned to expand their scope and their responsibility,” he says. “We have more people leading organizations than in the past, and I think that’s great for the PGA professional. We have a lot of success stories in golf today. The game obviously is quite healthy. PGA professionals are leading that management and helping drive this success that is happening in golf.”



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."



PGA

Carolinas Section

100 YEARS

★ 1923-2023 ★