

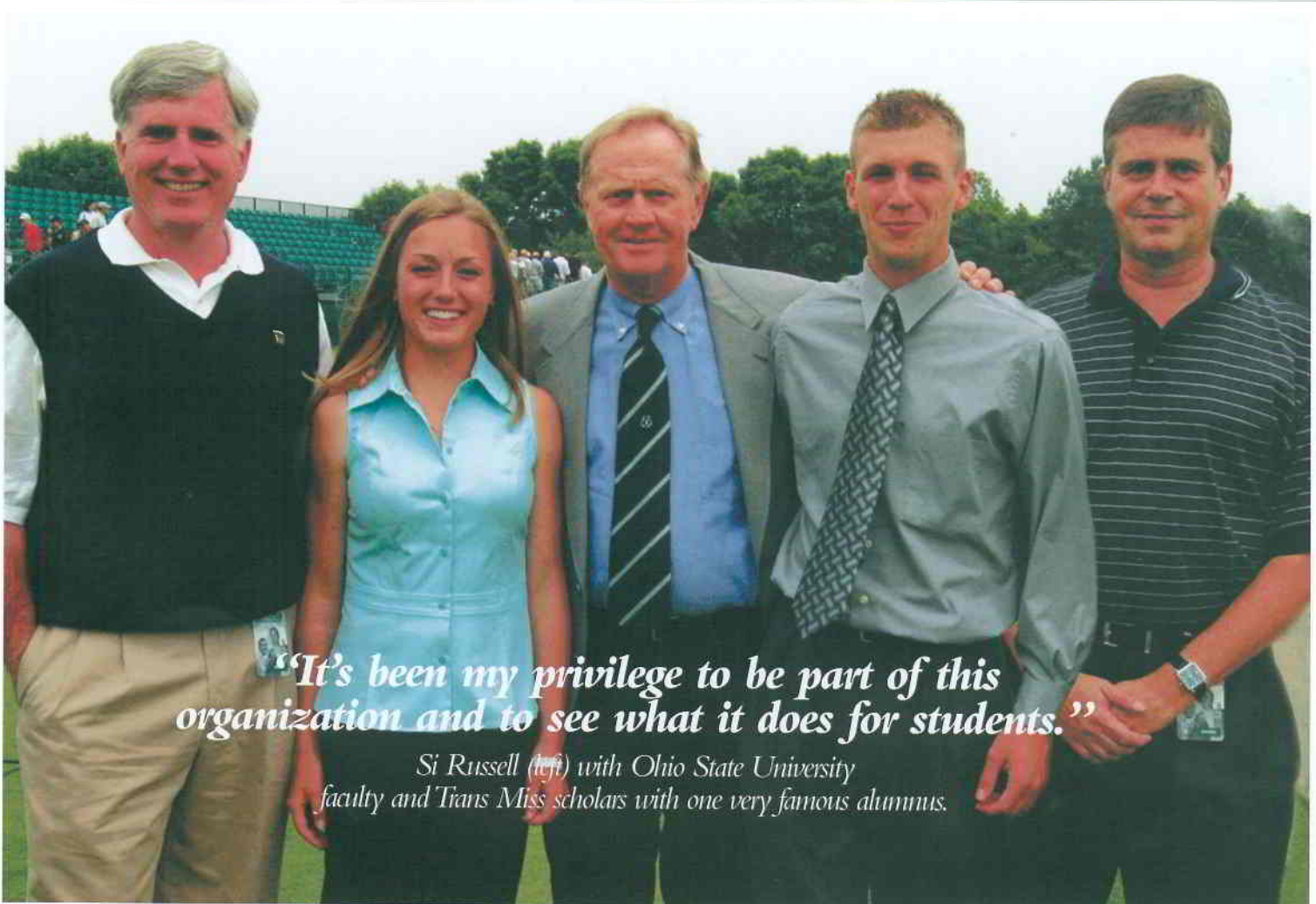


Serving Golf for More than 100 Years

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Si Russell enjoys helping aspiring turf students

USC grad has served as Trans-Miss scholarship director for 21 years



“It’s been my privilege to be part of this organization and to see what it does for students.”

Si Russell (left) with Ohio State University faculty and Trans Miss scholars with one very famous alumnus.

Cont'd on page 3

Greetings

Dear Trans-Miss Supporters,

■ Every charitable organization depends on the dedication and work of its volunteers to achieve its goals. The Trans-Mississippi Golf Association and its Turf Scholarship Fund has grown over the decades with the help of dozens of dynamic men who served as directors, but a few of them were true “super stars”.

■ S.I. Russell is one of those directors of distinction. Our turf scholarship program is nearly a “one-man show” with Si as the producer, the promoter and the star!

■ As you will read in this issue of the Transcript, Si has been the integral foundation of the association’s scholarship program for over 20 years. His time devotion is nearly a full-time job, but his compensation is only from the personal satisfaction of helping so many young men and women finance their college education and find jobs in the golf course turfgrass industry.

■ Professors at 21 universities around the nation know when Si calls Trans-Miss help is soon to follow. Nearly 900 students have received scholarships from the Trans over the last 55 years, and over half of those have been helped during the Si Russell tenure. It was at Si’s urging that our board of directors recently agreed that our annual awards needed to be increased by 40% to a total of \$90,000. Our goal is to award \$150,000 per year by 2011.

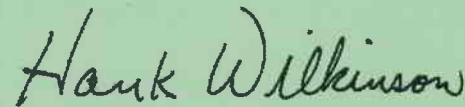
■ My fellow directors and I send our sincere thanks to our colleague Si Russell for doing far more than his fair share of the work to make our scholarship program a success! By the way, Si also spends his “spare time” calling and emailing dozens of golfers around the nation recruiting them for our 105 year-old championship played in July!

■ I hope that 2008 was a good year for you, especially in these times of economic stress and uncertainty. The golf industry is not immune to the news of the day, and that makes it even more important that the Trans-Mississippi Turf Scholarship Fund help aspiring golf course superintendents learn their craft.

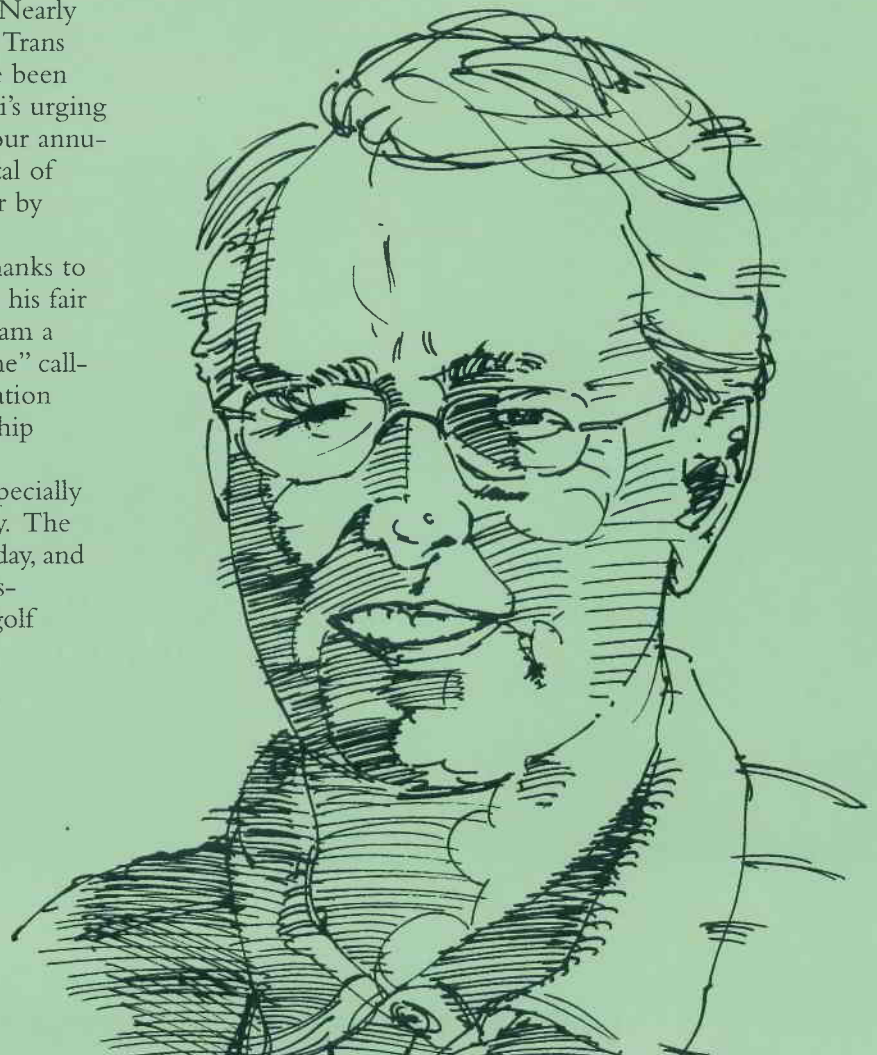
■ The Trans is blessed to have so many supporters that 2008 was one of our best years for donations. So our thanks to the member clubs, directors, championship participants and donors who helped the Trans continue on its mission to help education tomorrow’s best golf course superintendents.

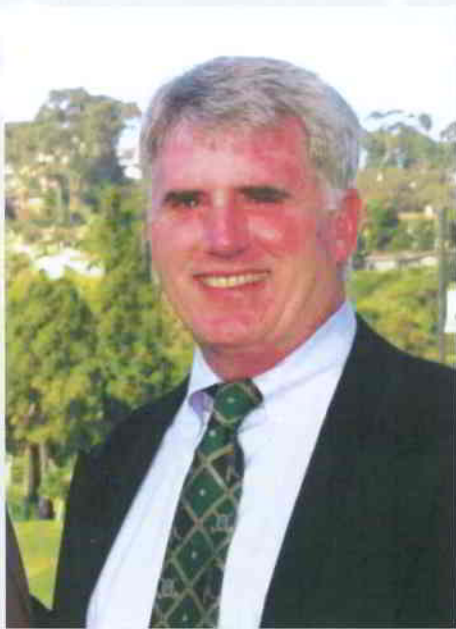
■ Have a wonderful and inspiring holiday season!

Best wishes,



Hank Wilkinson
President
Trans-Mississippi Golf Association





■ If you've ever been fortunate enough to be named a Trans-Mississippi scholarship winner you've probably had the opportunity to get to know Si Russell. The Belleair, Fla. resident and longtime Trans director is in charge of the association's scholarship program and has been helping qualified aspiring turf students get a financial boost for the last 21 years. It's a post Russell takes a lot of pride in and one that has allowed him to help shape the lives of bright young people. That work, and all his other Trans involvement, has also allowed him to meet many of the people who have become so important in his life.

■ "One thing that I've gotten out of this through the medium of golf is you meet the most wonderful people and many of those have turned into life-long friendships," says the semi-retired 55-year-old whose resume includes stints running a family trucking business, managing an avocado ranch and working as an insurance agent. "Some of the (Trans) directors have become my dearest friends. It's been my privilege to be part of this organization and to see what it does for students. That's given me a lot of personal satisfaction. This is one of the great golf organizations in America."

■ Russell says watching former Trans scholarship winners ascend to high places in the golf industry attests to the importance of the program. Just this past fall, Trans Four-Ball Championship participants played three stunning Bandon Dunes Resort courses where former Trans scholar Ken Nice serves as director of agronomy.

■ "Many of our former scholarship

winner winners are at the top clubs in the country," Russell boasts. "Our former scholars include guys like (noted golf course architects) Jay Morrish and Scott Miller and several turf professors around the country are Trans-Miss scholars."

Lesson learned

■ Russell's introduction to golf came at a fairly early age. His parents were members of a few clubs which included Bob-O-Link Golf Club near Chicago, Eldorado and Thunderbird Country Clubs in Palm Springs. His father, Sam, was an accomplished player who served on Bob-O-Link's green committee and became a club president and a club champion.

■ Russell says he can recall watching Arnold Palmer play in the PGA Tour's desert stop, long before it became the Bob Hope, and that really sparked his lifelong love of golf. Russell's grandfather, Sam Sr. invented the electric blanket in 1912 and from that creation his two sons, Sam and Edward, built a successful manufacturing business in Mississippi. His grandfather's company was the largest single employer in Mississippi at one time and was eventually bought out by the Sunbeam Corporation.

■ Russell had built a putting green in his backyard as a youngster under the tutelage of Bob-O-Link Golf Club's pioneer superintendent Bob Williams. The experience helped seed and develop his interest in the field of golf course maintenance. About that time another event forever changed his game. He received a lesson from legendary instructor and Thunderbird head professional Claude Harmon.

■ "I started hitting the ball really well and actually began learning how to play golf," Russell admits. "I was lucky growing up."

The Walrus and another famous Simpson from USC

■ Russell played high school golf in the Chicago suburb of Winnetka his sophomore and junior years and was developing into a pretty good junior player before moving to California and playing on the La Jolla High School team his senior year with future PGA Tour star Craig Stadler. The two went on to be teammates on the University of Southern California team.

■ There Russell learned a valuable golf lesson about just how talented Tour-caliber players are by watching roommates and future major cham-

pionship winners Scott Simpson and Stadler.

■ "I played a little on the team (at USC)," says Russell, who defeated teammate Stadler, the reigning U.S. Amateur at the time, in the first round of match play at the 1974 Trans-Mississippi Championships at Cedar Ridge Country Club in Tulsa, Okla. "I did fairly well in the tournament in 1974. But I just didn't have the ability to go on Tour watching Stadler and Simpson play; I knew my game lacked the consistency..."

■ Currently, Russell says his handicap is around 7 and he's too busy to truly "work" on his golf game. "I play about two times a month – and very much still enjoy the game," says Russell, who was a member at Lakeside Golf Club in Toluca Lake, Calif., for 25 years, a course where celebrities like Hope and Bing Crosby often strolled the fairways. He was also a member of La Jolla Country Club for five years.

Winding career path

■ In 1976 Russell received a degree in industrial and systems engineering from USC and moved to Mississippi to work as an engineering project manager for Northern Electric Company. He began running the family's trucking business in 1978 and did that for about five years.

In 1982, Russell moved back to California and began a dual career as an insurance agent/broker for Builders & Merchants Insurance and manager of the family's 144-acre avocado ranch in Fallbrook. He would do that for the next 18 years, turning the ranch back into a profit maker while gaining marked respect for those who work in agriculture for a living.

■ "I really enjoyed it," Russell says of his work at Rancho Camargo, which Calavo Grower's co-op would come to consider one of the best farms in their system of thousands of acres. "The maintenance of golf courses and the farming -- it kind of tied together and clarified my understanding of what it took to take care of a golf course and formed a firm foundation in my future work as Trans scholarship chairman."

■ In the early 1990s, Russell returned to head his family's trucking business. Working as a member of the board of directors before becoming president in 1994, Russell led the company back to more than \$750,000 a year in profits on more than \$10 million in sales.

■ “Through restructuring company management and staff, returning pride to the crew, eliminating 85 percent of accidents and through improved efficiency of maintenance and operating costs, the operations were turned around,” he says of the going concern that the family would sell in 1995.

■ In 1999, the family sold the avocado ranch, but Russell, who ran a Farmers Insurance agency in Burbank, Calif., from 1987 to 1995, remained in the insurance business until his retirement from insurance in 2006.

Finding turf scholars

■ After his involvement in playing the Trans-Miss as a young amateur, and at the encouraging of longtime TMGA directors Jack and Jim Vickers, Russell became a Trans director in 1984. In 1991 and 2002 he would help run successful Trans-Miss Championships at home club Lakeside.

■ In 1987, longtime Trans director Judd Ringer, who’d run the scholarship program for 28 years, encouraged Russell to take over the post. Russell did in 1988 and he’s been in the position ever since.

■ “I took over for Judd, we went to Michigan State to meet the (turf) professors and I just got more involved from that point,” Russell says. “I’ve always enjoyed working with organizations like the Trans-Miss. I really was surprised at the quality of the young men I met at that initial meeting and helping them succeed in their academic careers has become a big part of my life.”

■ As chairman of the scholarship program it was Russell’s responsibility to identify the nation’s turf programs and identify prospective scholars at each school who have a passion for becoming a golf course superintendent, attend board meetings and, after determining what funds were available, turning the money into scholarships for the students.

■ “Most of the professors have a pretty good idea which students will become top superintendents,” explains Russell, who added that some 21 colleges or universities in the United States now take part in the program. “I review the applications, make requests for more information and to answer any questions that come up and give out the awards.”

Profession ‘making inroads’

■ Russell, who also served as Trans president from 1997 to 2000, says finding students who want to put their “heart and soul” into the profession is important.

■ “Most have some sort of agricultural background and that works well with a turf management education,” he says. “When they get the funds they are so thankful and so appreciative. It’s amazed me they have so much passion. I’m really proud to help them out.”

■ Russell says many of the Trans scholars serve as interns at some of the top golf clubs in the country at some point in their college career.

■ “They really set a good example of what the Trans is all about,” Russell boasts. “It’s very satisfying to see the inroads we’ve made in the architecture, turf education and superintendent professions.”

■ Russell adds educating new golfers and the public on how superintendents operate in the “green” world we live in can only enhance the turf management profession.

■ “It’s important we let them know how superintendents are taking care of our environment, using more organic solutions and that the golf course is a living substance,” he says. “You have to have an appreciation for that.”

■ And that helps superintendents who deal with golfers’ extreme course conditioning demands on a daily basis, Russell advises.

■ “Golf costs so much and so much money is being spent on golf course maintenance,” he says. “We have to get back to where a bunker and rough are once again hazards. There is so much pressure to provide course conditions that are just unattainable.”

Family life in Florida

■ Russell plays most of his golf these days at the Belleair Resort near his home in greater Tampa. He understands the time-consuming nature of getting better and/or lowering his handicap.

■ “You have to put a lot of time into it,” he says. “But if you love something, you do it.”

Russell says educating those new to the game is key to helping golf flourish in these difficult economic times.

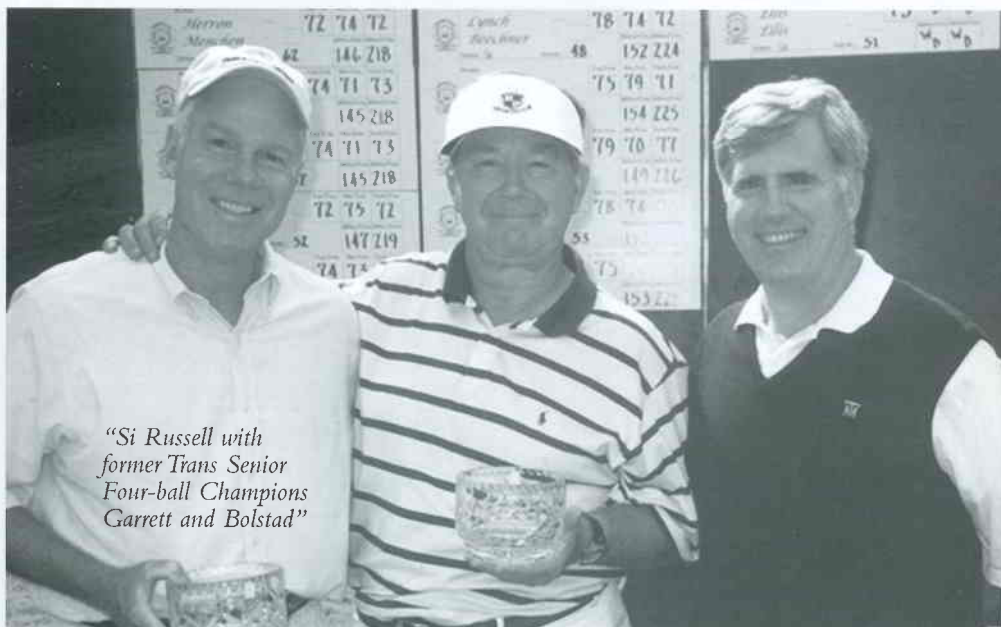
■ “We really need to educate people as they come into the game, give them the tools that make it easier for them and educate them on the history of the game and what it entails to give them a better appreciation for it,” he says. “If you understand the history of the game, it gives you a better idea on how to play it. The more you understand the game, the more you want to go out and play it. Golf is such a wonderful thing; it allows you to meet people from all over the world.”

■ With two pre-teen daughters, Russell and wife of 13 years Wendy are kept very busy with family outings and their girls’ events. Emily, 11, and Megan, 9, are involved in the typical things girls their age do, gymnastics, girl scouts, etc. etc.

■ “They’re very involved in school and with their friends,” says Russell, who also has two grown children from a previous marriage. “We have a lot of family outings.”

■ Si and Wendy came to Florida almost four years ago to do studies in Scientology. Their girls enrolled in a private school that they liked so much they decided to stay.

■ “It has really helped me in all aspects in life and has given me the tools to be successful in business,” Si Russell says.



“Si Russell with former Trans Senior Four-ball Champions Garrett and Bolstad”

News from the Trans

Chris Maletis named to Board of Directors

- Three-time Trans Senior Champion Chris Maletis of Portland, Oregon was unanimously voted onto the TMGA board of directors at its fall meeting held at Bandon Dunes Golf Resort in October.
- Maletis, a nationally top-ranked senior amateur golfer, is also a golf course owner. He won the Trans Senior in 2004, 2005 and 2007. He has been the senior player of the year in Oregon three times since 2001 and he was the state's overall player of the year in 2004. He and his brother Tom own Langdon Farms Golf Club, a public facility near Portland that is ranked as the #2 public course in Oregon. Chris will bring his considerable industry knowledge and contacts to the Trans board.



2009 Championships at Famous Venues

- Trans Miss players will find two more appealing sites for the association's golf championships in 2009.
- The summer match play championship will be held the last week of June (two weeks earlier than the traditional date) at Flint Hills National Golf Club near Wichita. Owner and Trans director Tom Devlin is pleased to host this event for a second time. Those contestants from the 2003 Trans already know what an outstanding golf course and clubhouse facility awaits us next year. Flint Hills National GC hosted the 2007 U.S. Senior Amateur and the 2001 U.S. Women's Amateur.
- The fall four-ball heads back to the Denver area for four days at the famous Cherry Hills Country Club. A long-time member club and host for Trans Miss events, Cherry Hills will be a very attractive draw for the Trans Miss players. The date is September 21-24.

