John Fanning

John was born in 1950. A Cincinnati native, he grew up in the Oakley area near Hyde Park Country Club. He attended St. Cecilia grade school and Purcell High School.

Being close to Hyde Park Country Club it was naturally a big part of John’s life. He recalls often being chased off the property by Don Likes or John Laake. Eventually he would become a caddy at Hyde Park and thus started his career in golf.

At the age of 15 John and a buddy were out looking for jobs, putting in applications at numerous places. It just so happened that Losantiville Country Club was the first to call, and John accepted a position working under Taylor Boyd for two years. Taylor was also instrumental in John’s contacting and starting his turfgrass education at Penn State University.

John worked as an assistant for Dick Craig at Camargo Country Club starting in 1967. While completing his education at Penn State, he became the Superintendent for Terrace Park Country Club in 1970 at the age of only 19. John was one of the youngest Superintendents in Cincinnati golf maintenance history!

In 1971, John married the girl next door, Debby, the girl he had grown up with. They have two beautiful daughters, Carole and Christy, and now have 4 grandchildren. Debby has not only been a huge part of John’s life, but she has also been a huge part of the history of our association. Debby served as the Executive Administrator of the greater Cincinnati GCSA from 1975-1995, taking care of all our business affairs, keeping everything running smoothly and efficiently. Together, John and Debby managed the GCGCSA finances and published the monthly newsletter. They even took the reservation for all GCGCSA meetings and events.

John served as Superintendent at Terrace Park Country Club for 12 years (1970 1981). From there he moved on to a successful career in sales. He joined forces with Dwight Brown at the George W. Hill Company and worked there from 1981-1992. John credits Dwight with a lot of his theories on salesmanship and his success. One of Dwight’s laws, and one that John has always lived by is that “ you treat people with the same respect whether they spend $100 or $50,000 with you”.

His experience as a Superintendent helped him develop his talents as a sales rep., mentor and teacher for golf course superintendents and other reps in the industry. He always had some unique, helpful idea or knowledge to pass on. He could always answer any questions you had, and if things weren’t going too well (which happened frequently back then), he also had a kind word and a workable solution to make you and the situation better.

After his time at the Hill Company John spent time working with The Anderson’s, Canon Turf, Turf Partners, Tyler, and eventually ending with UHS. His career in sales ended after 25 years of service. He then worked as an assistant at Cincinnati Country Club, then at Wyoming Country Club. Finally at the young age of 60, John fully retired.

John served as President of the Greater Cincinnati GCSA for 2 years in 1977-78. He was editor of the Green Breeze from 1971-1980, and Secretary/Treasurer for many years. Among his list of credits are:

* President of the KTC (Kentucky Turfgrass Council) 1984
* President of OTF (Ohio Turfgrass Foundation) 1990
* Served on USGA committees for 15 years
* Received the OTF Professional of the Year Award
* Taught for two years at Cincinnati State
* Spoke at many OTF conferences

John had the foresight, through those many years, to collect and keep safe any and all written and pictorial history of the GCGCSA he could find. If that wasn’t enough, he was also our official photographer, taking pictures of all our meetings, family events, Christmas parties etc. John not only donated a lot of his time to this organization, but he has ensured that future generations of superintendents will always have a history to look back upon.

John was inducted into the Greater Cincinnati GCSA Hall of Fame in 2017.