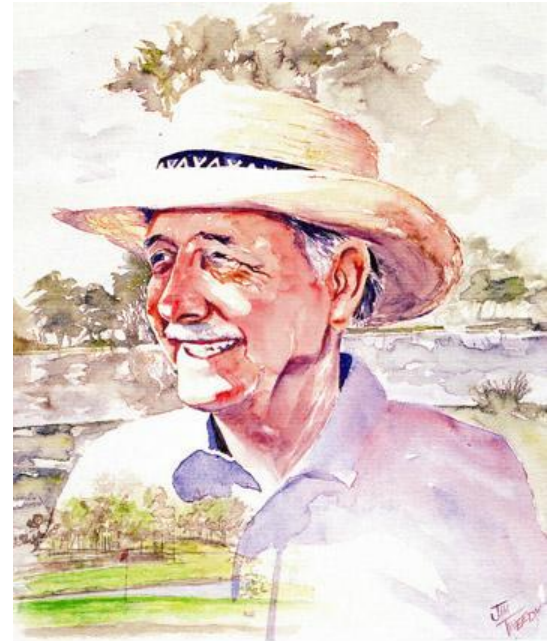


GENTLEMAN JOE LEE

For over 50 years, Mr. Joe Lee was a golf course architect and a consummate gentleman of the game. Joe Lee might be the greatest golf course architect you never heard of.

Joe Lee remained surprisingly anonymous despite creating and renovating more than 250 golf courses, including several with PGA Tour pedigree. Lee served in the Navy during World War II, then received his degree from Miami, taking classes at night so he could play golf. As a teaching pro after graduation, he met famed course architect Dick Wilson and later went to work for him.

With Wilson battling personal issues, Lee took on a larger role and did his most inspired work before Wilson's death in 1965. During this period, he was instrumental in creating five courses that served as longtime venues for PGA Tour events -- LaCosta in Carlsbad, Calif., The Blue Monster at Doral, Cog Hill in the suburbs of Chicago, Warwick Hills in suburban Detroit, and Bay Hill, the central Florida course that Arnold Palmer bought in 1976.



Lee constructed approximately 146 of his courses in the Southeast with 71 in Florida (including the RED, WHITE and BLUE courses of Sugar Mill CC) and 30 in Georgia. In Louisiana, Joe Lee designed Squirrel Run in New Iberia, a result of Morgan Earnest's recommendation to his family member that they hire Lee. While Lee also designed the 36 holes at Eastover in New Orleans East, Hurricane Katrina claimed that course in 2005 and it closed shortly after one valiant attempt to re-open in 2007.

Following the teachings of Wilson, Lee built many memorable courses out of featureless, flat land in Florida. To create definition, Lee raised his greens and canted them toward the fairways. He enhanced them with large bunkers, often situated at varying elevations to give players a three-dimensional view. Lee also guarded many of his greens with water hazards, but often provided less skilled players an option to play around the trouble.

"I don't think there should be any tricks on a golf course," Lee said. "Golfers want a challenge, but they want a fair one."

That's what Lee was all about, right up until his death in 2002. His last course, Musket Ridge in Maryland, is one of the most popular upscale public tracks in the Washington/Baltimore area.

"Joe Lee has never built a bad course," Jack Nicklaus said.

In an effort to get Lee some much deserved recognition, Ron Whitten of Golf Digest wrote a 2002 book about his career, "Gentleman Joe Lee: Fifty Years of Golf Course Design." The Joe Lee Scholarship Foundation was also created after Joe's death in 2002 to help college bound children and employees working at courses he designed.