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## (president's message)

# A profession with a purpose

I can still remember the first day I strapped on my boots and became a member of the grounds crew at Golden Eagle Golf and Country Club in my hometown of Tallahassee, Fla. It was a crisp fall morning in 1988, and I arrived before sunrise with a great deal of anxiety. Not only did I have trepidation about the new job, but I was also uncertain about my long-term future. I have always been goal-oriented, and I believe with hard work and a positive attitude, anything is achievable, but at that stage in my life, my focus and drive weren't quite as developed as they are today.

From the very beginning, I was welcomed and guided by superintendent Jeff Vietmeier and his staff, and it was soon apparent that I had found my true calling in life. Jeff and his staff taught me the basics and were patient with an inexperienced young man who only a week prior had cut off his shoulder-length hair in preparation for the job interview. The absolute joy I felt every day I was on that beautiful piece of property provided all the motivation I needed to realize I wanted a career in golf course management, and it's a decision I've never regretted.

In my nearly 30 years in the profession, both the industry and I have gone through significant changes, but the passion I felt that first day on the job remains today. It was undoubtedly fate that I stumbled into an industry that has been so very rewarding and has provided me with a tremendous life. I feel truly blessed to be able to do what I love — to work as a golf course superintendent and enjoy the many benefits that come with the job.

In part, it's my very unceremonious start in the golf industry that makes it so humbling to become the 82nd president of GCSAA. It was never a goal of mine, but I cannot adequately express the pride I have in being in a position to serve in this role. It is truly a privilege to serve the nearly 18,000 members of GCSAA, and it is a responsibility I do not take lightly.

When I was first elected to the GCSAA Board of Directors in 2012, I made a commitment to serve each and every member of the association, advance their profession, and enhance the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game of golf. Throughout my board service, my dedication and passion have been

heightened, and my list of goals has grown. Today, I am eager to build on past momentum and continue advancing the mission of GCSAA.

GCSAA's commitment to providing members with world-class educational, professional development and networking opportunities remains as strong today as it was when I first joined the association. I know I would not be the superintendent I am today without all that GCSAA offers, and while times have certainly changed, both the association and I remain committed to these endeavors and making sure they stay relevant and beneficial to members, both now and into the future.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with my fellow and past directors, GCSAA staff, chapter leaders, committees, task groups and countless other dedicated and talented individuals around the country during my time on the GCSAA board. Serving the association has allowed me to give back a small fraction of what I have received working in this great profession.

I am extremely appreciative of the tremendous support the GCSAA membership has shown during my time on the board. I am also grateful for the unwavering encouragement of my employer, my team, and the members of Olde Florida Golf Club, as well as the affiliated GCSAA chapters I am a part of. They have all encouraged me to serve and have supported my efforts to give back to the golf industry.

The future of the golf course industry is bright, and with a "T.E.A.M." approach — "Together, Everyone Accomplishes More" — I am extremely optimistic that we can all continue to advance the profession and enhance the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game.

Please reach out to me at any time if I can be of assistance, or if you have thoughts you want to share. All of my contact information can be found on my website, [www.darrenjdavisgcs.com](http://www.darrenjdavisgcs.com).

Darren Davis, CGCS, is the golf course superintendent at Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples, Fla., and a 28-year GCSAA member.