

ROBERT MUIR GRAVES

(1930 -)

BACKGROUND

A Michigan native who attended Michigan State, where Arthur Hills was a classmate. Obtained a Landscape Architecture degree from the University of California at Berkeley in 1953. Became a licensed landscape architect in 1955. Turned to golf design within the next four years.

One of the most prolific architects in history, involved in designing, remodeling, or consulting on some 650 golf courses throughout the U.S. and several foreign countries.

Was elected President of the American Society of Golf Course Architects in 1974. Wrote extensively on a number of topics relating to golf course architecture. Lectured on the subject at Cal, the University of Massachusetts, Utah State and the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Conducted very popular two-day seminars on course design with Geoffrey Cornish for over a dozen years.

Introduced and trained many future golf architects, which over the decades included Daniel Bucko, John Bush, Ronald Fream, Damian Pascuzzo, Michael Stark and Neal Meagher. In the 1990s, legendary professional golfer Sam Snead served as a design consultant on a few Graves projects.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Bob Graves has often spoken of his Three Ps of golf design: Playability, Practicality and Pulchritude. As a high-handicapper all his life, playability was especially important, and he achieved it by providing wide berths around most obstacles. He accomplished practicality by engineering courses that drained rapidly and mowed easily. In his early years he achieved pulchritude, or physical beauty, by creating lush, green layouts. But Graves recognized the need to retain compatibility with the environment, and he was one of the first architects to utilize native plantings and natural roughs in his designs.

IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

Multi-level teeing areas, often elevated above targets. Fingery bunkers surrounded by soft mounds. Mounding around greens tied into existing terrain.