

WILLIAM F. MITCHELL

(1912 - 1974)

BACKGROUND

One of several sons of Robert A. Mitchell, a respected course superintendent in Massachusetts. Worked as a superintendent himself from age 19 until the late 1930s, when he worked for golf architect Orrin Smith in the construction of several New England layouts.

Served as a Navy pilot during World War II, then became a superintendent in Boston. In 1947 he and two of his brothers, Samuel and Henry, formed a golf design and construction firm, Mitchell Brothers, which continued until 1954. He continued to design full-time, from an office on Long Island, after both Sam and Henry left.

By the 1960s, was extremely active as far south as Florida and as far west as Michigan. Hired Richard La Conte to serve as his design associate and moved to West Palm Beach, FL, where he died at age 62.

Was an early advocate of separate courses designed specifically for women golfers, and shortly before his death had been retained by the LPGA to build such a course. Also popularized shorter courses consisting of par-3 and par-4 holes, and dubbed them "executive courses," because such courses could be quickly played by business executives at the tail end of a hectic workday.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

As a former superintendent, Mitchell stressed ease of maintenance in his designs. His courses were well-engineered for drainage by elevating greens high above their surrounds and subtly crowning the fairways. His tees and greens were large to spread out play, and his bunkers could be mechanically raked.

IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

Perched greens. Very large bunkers, but sparingly used and always visible.