



MICHAEL JOHN HURDZAN, Ph.D., ASLA, ASGCA Fellow

Partner | Hurdzan Golf Course Design | b.1943

Born into the coal and steel proletariat of 1940s West Virginia, Dr. Michael J. Hurdzan (Colonel, Retired, USAR, Special Forces) found himself well outside the gates of the local country club.

Seven decades later, he became the fifth person in golf to achieve the non-playing “Grand Slam” as recipient of the highest honor from our industry’s “Big 3”: the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, the American Society of Golf Course Architects and the Golf Course Builders Association of America. Today, there are seven on that list: Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Byron Nelson, Robert Trent Jones, Sr., Rees Jones, Pete Dye and Michael J. Hurdzan.

If such universal peer recognition for a blue-collar mortal seems improbable, consider the “Slam” had shorter odds than Erin Hills, an original design of Dr. Hurdzan with then business partner Dana Fry and Golf Digest Architectural Editor Ron Whitten which, in 10 years, evolved from a “\$50 green fee public course in rural Wisconsin” to host of the 2017 US Men’s Open and 2025 US Women’s Open.

In a career still accelerating, which began in 1957 as an apprentice to the late American Society of Golf Course Architects Past President and firm founder Jack Kidwell, Dr. Hurdzan has authored 6 books, the first of which, *Golf Course Architecture: Evolutions in Design, Construction, and Restoration Technology*, is regarded by many authorities as “the modern bible of golf course design.”

Four hundred plus projects bearing the Hurdzan name can now be found on 5 continents, including a suite of “Top 100” North American designs and several firsts – the first Environmental Education golf course (Widow’s Walk, MA) and the first Environmental Demonstration golf course (FarmLinks, AL) – both formulated well before the word “environment” was in vogue.

Dr. Hurdzan remains steadfast that Devil’s Paintbrush (Toronto), crafted for the originators of the board game Trivial Pursuit, remains his finest design, even though it occurred some 30 years ago before his most venerated layouts.

Drawing upon an endless, age defying vitality, Dr. Hurdzan continues to share his demonstrable wisdom with a small suite of clients who endeavor to tastefully and pragmatically re-project the principles of “Golden Age Architecture” across select commissions primarily east of the Mississippi and north of the Mason Dixon line.