

Dear Stanley Thompson Society Members,

Thank you very much for this honour. I am humbled to be awarded this scholarship which will greatly assist in my study of golf course architecture at The University of Guelph. Your support is very much appreciated!

Life is funny, as it was in fact Stanley Thompson who was a major factor in my desire to become a golf course architect. My father attended the University of Guelph for environmental science. He told me as a youngster about a golf course in Guelph with our family's name – Cutten Fields. My dad being from England could not trace our lineage back far enough to make the family connection, but in doing so found the connections between the University of Guelph, Cutten Fields and Stanley Thompson.

Working at Westmount Golf and Country Club, during my undergrad at the University of Waterloo in Planning and Environmental Design, sold me on golf course design. I have been engrossed with all things golf for the past 7 years in a quest to make myself Canada's next great architect. I have traveled coast to coast building and visiting golf courses. My passion has led to such Stanley Thompson projects as Westmount G&CC (2013 bunker and green renovation), Cutten Fields (2012 practice area and tee reconstruction), Peterborough G&CC (2012 practice area reconstruction), and Brockville G&CC (2011 Master Plan design).

I am proud to say, that at just 30 years of age, I am an skilled project manager, golf course shaper and graphic designer/draftsman. I have worked for many architects including Rod Whitman, Jeff Mingay, Ian Andrew, Doug Carrick and Thomas McBroom on projects across Canada and into the States. I continue to operate my own company, Cutten Golf Course Design, which provides drafting and design services to architects such as Jeff Mingay and Rod Whitman. I have also achieved my designation and stamp as a Professional Planner, allowing me to take projects from start to finish. I see the completion of the MLA degree as the next step in my quest to become Canada's next great golf course architect.

My thesis will focus on the future of golf course design in North America. I believe that the recent US Open at Pinehurst No. 2 changed the standards for good golf course design. Gone were the deep and lush rough areas, replaced with native sand hazards and native plant species. However, the renovators, Coore and Crenshaw were quoted as saying that they "were not environmental crusaders" but that they simply wanted to restore the classic course to its intended design. Why then are these top architects not intentionally designing to benefit the game through improved environmental design standards and sound economic principles? The world's best golf courses were historically designed to suit the land. On the list of the world's top 100 courses, the majority were built before 1940. Are golfers simply nostalgic, or is there something more to be said for these early designs? Can the goals and design principles of the early courses not be distilled in order to mitigate our impact on the environment and the economy of golf courses, while at the same time improving golf for the masses?

I have had the opportunity to attend two Stanley Thompson symposiums, including the first out in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. I was lucky enough to have worked out in Nova Scotia for three years helping create Cabot Links in Inverness. Again, I think it is funny how life can work and come full circle. It was ST who got me into golf course design and it is now his society helping me to continue in my pursuit of becoming a great architect. Thank you all very much for your generosity.

Best regards,
Keith Cutten