**GCSAA Grassroots Ambassador Leadership Award**

**Anthony Williams**

**TPC Four Season Golf and Sports Club Dallas at Las Colinas**

My story as a grassroots ambassador is unique and speaks to the value of the program on many levels. First, I was a member of the inaugural class of GCSAA Grassroots Ambassadors. I had always been politically active for GCSAA in my home state of Georgia. So much so that I won the 2014 GCSAA Excellence in Government relations award, having achieved this huge GCSAA milestone I was really afraid I would be passed over for the Grassroots Ambassador program but I asked to be considered and was selected in class number one! Then assigned to Georgia District 4 Congressman Hank Johnson. I wanted to believe that we would find a way to be successful but we were on the surface total opposites. For instance, Buddist-Christian, vegetarian-hunter meat eater, inner city childhood-rural farm kid, lawyer-turf manager and the list went on. However when we met in his district office we found that our sense of community was shared and more powerful than our differences. We became friends and the congressman agreed to come and see our property, community service and environmental work first hand. Unfortunately, I suffered an aortic aneurism on the course and had emergency open heart surgery before we could host the congressman. He called me several times during my recovery reminding me I owed him a golf tour and wished me the best. We did the tour and the pictures are part of Grassroots Ambassador History of the two most unlikely people, meeting in the most unlikely place to show that anything is possible if you stop and find common ground. My meeting with Congressman Johnson has wife, staff and other members of the Black Congressional Caucus at the Stone Mountain Golf Club is one of my most emotional moments as a superintendent/ambassador.

The next chapter of my Grassroots Ambassador story followed my retirement after a 30 year stand out career with Marriott Golf. I took some time to travel speaking at regional/national events and encouraging others to become Grassroots Ambassadors sharing our story and teaching BMP’s. I covered everywhere from Idaho, Utah , Nevada, California, Missouri, Kansas, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Rhode Island, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Texas, Washington DC and the list goes on. I eventually realized I could be more effective as a superintendent again so I started to look for an opportunity. It came in the form of a Director of Golf and Landscape Operations position at TPC Four Seasons Dallas at Las Colinas Host of the 2017 Byron Nelson PGA event. A quick GIS meeting with Chava and Mike and I was back as a Grass Roots Ambassador (Texas- District 24 Representative Kenny Marchant) attending more training like the GIS “boot camps” and the webinars/updates. Most recently while adding North Texas and Lone Star GCSA Board service to my endeavors; I have renewed my role as grassroots recruiter helping fill my old post in Georgia and working with Mike Lee placing one of my brilliant Texas assistants, Mitch O’Brey as ambassador for Texas – District 26 (Representative Michael Burgess) while I serve as his Grass Roots mentor. I owe Rhett Evans, the GCSAA Board and Chava McKeel a huge thank you for encouraging me throughout this journey and allowing me to be part of the 2018 National Golf Day.

After many issues, meetings, town halls, case studies, trainings, fund raisers and friendships I feel fortunate to be part of this amazing program. Please consider me for the honor of the GCSAA Grassroots Ambassador Leadership Award. I stand ready to lead, follow and serve