

Spotlight

James W. Tufts Has A Secret: Knows Where Wildflowers Are

BY FLORENCE GILKESON

He has devoted a lifetime to business and community service. His name is synonymous with Pinehurst.

But James W. Tufts seems happiest when he reveals a secret about himself: he has discovered eight or 10 different wild orchids in the Sandhills.

"I like the woods and wildflowers and that sort of thing. I like to hike and see the flowers," he said in a recent interview.

A dedicated lover of the outdoors, Tufts is an independent student of botany, geology, and archaeology.

The grandson of the founder of Pinehurst admits to no more than lukewarm interest in golf, but he loves horses and dogs. His love for wildlife has led him on rescue missions whereby delicate flowers have been transplanted from the path of bulldozers.

Tufts knows where to find the lupine, the pitcher plant and the orchids in the wild, and he doesn't tell their whereabouts. Not everyone can be trusted to preserve their gentle integrity. Pinehurst is home and always has been, although he was born and spent his first year in Massachusetts.

Tufts learned the resort business from the bottom up.

His famous grandfather died before his birth, and Tufts recalls that his father soon found it necessary to relinquish the main family business, The American Soda Fountain Co., to devote more time to Pinehurst, which was suffering growing pains. The family moved to Pinehurst, and soon their summer place in New Hampshire was visited less and less frequently.

Young Tufts attended a series of schools, including the old Parsons School, a boarding institution situated not far from the headwaters of Pinehurst Lake. He attended Middlesex School, Concord, Mass., then entered Harvard as an engineering student.

"That was a mistake," Tufts said, both of the engineering and the Harvard experience. He was not cut out to be an engineer.



James W. Tufts

Making matters worse, he was one of only three undergraduate students in the course.

When he was offered a trip abroad, Tufts gratefully accepted and never returned to Harvard. He does not regret it.

At Harvard he did take a course in geology, which was not a mistake, for the basics of the college study introduced him to a field he later developed into a fascinating hobby through his independent studies of the outdoors.

His first job with Pinehurst was that of assistant to the second cook at the Carolina Hotel. The job involved making soup.

"I don't think you could get any lower on the ladder," he chuckled.

He worked in that capacity six or seven months and does not regret a minute of it.

"It was very useful in later years," he said. "It was helpful because I came to understand how the employees at the hotel ticked."

Tufts spent one summer as desk clerk for the Graystone Inn at Roaring Gap, another family enterprise.

Work with Pinehurst included a little of everything from youth through adulthood. For awhile he was in charge of the electric shop, which included the resort telephone system. Then his main job was supervisor of the direct mail department, and later he supervised the livery stable and the race track and finally he supervised the golf courses.

The jobs were varied and often challenging, "so it did give me a well-rounded contact with people," Tufts said.

His favorite of these jobs was worked during World War II, when he was supervising the lumber yards. There was a lumber shortage during the war years, and Pinehurst, Inc. began operating a saw mill to help out during the emergency. Part of his job involved selecting the trees to be cut for lumber.

"I loved marking timber. That was great, because it got me out in the woods, where I wanted to be," he reflected.

Tufts served as vice-president of the corporation, then became president.

Community service comes naturally to the man who has served 15 to 20 years on the

Moore Memorial Hospital board, who served almost 20 years on the ABC Board, and who served as Civil Defense chairman during World War II.

He is credited with the foresight which went into the planning of the comprehensive regional hospital facility. Friends say it was Tufts' idea to buy additional land to provide for future development, but he modestly declares that it was the general feeling of the entire board.

"We all knew hospitals with very nice plants but no room to expand," he said. Moore Memorial did need that land and used it for a \$16 million expansion.

Although he does not ride horses regularly these days, Tufts regards his work with the Mid-South Horse Show as a favorite. He has served as treasurer of the show, which now encompasses a series of informal schooling shows each year. These replaced the old three-day show.

This is just one of his projects with horsemanship, a hobby which dates to his childhood. He was secretary-treasurer of the Pinehurst trials for 50 years.

In spite of a life long interest in horses and dogs, Tufts has never owned a horse. The livery stable was too convenient in his early years. He does keep two dogs at home.

Polo was a popular sport when he was younger, and Tufts remembers playing polo in Pinehurst in the 1920's and 1930's.

Through the years he has simply expanded his interest in wild flowers, geology and archaeology.

Long hikes through the woods of the Sandhills have introduced him to many aspects of natural life.

"Some of the wildflowers are very striking and very pretty. I just like to see what's there," he explained.

He has what he describes as "a fair collection of Indian arrowheads," some of which he collected while visiting an Indian mound near Jackson Springs with friends years ago.

His study into the geology of this section of the state has helped him to understand the reasons for the existence of these sandhills.

Tufts has an anecdote about most of his activities, whether they are community service, hobby or work.

While he was Civil Defense chairman during World War II, he recalls blackout periods called because of military maneuvers throughout the area. Civil Defense was alerted when parachute drops were held at night and involved the use of gliders. Between 25,000 and 50,000 men were being dropped one night, and a large number of casualties was expected.

"We were very fortunate," he recollected. "One fellow broke his leg when the glider landed in a pig sty near Jackson Hamlet, and a board came up through the glider and struck his leg." He was the only casualty.

Another parachutist landed in a swamp near what is Country Club of North Carolina today. He landed about 10 p.m., and it was next day before he made it out of the swamp.

As if all these duties were not enough, Tufts was also running the Holly Inn during the war days. "The war left us short of help," he explained drily.

One of his anecdotes is told at his own expense.

During the 1930's when the first ABC stores were being opened in Moore County, Tufts joined many citizens in efforts to secure the names of a majority of the

voters on a petition.

On his travels one day Tufts stopped at the home of a couple to explain the need for the petition and what the people of Southern Pines and Pinehurst hoped to accomplish with an ABC system. The man did not exactly decline to sign the petition, but said he would confer with his wife first. He never did sign.

Back home in Pinehurst, Tufts found his friends laughing merrily at his efforts. It seems the man he visited was regarded as one of the biggest bootleggers in the area. No temperance fan, that man simply had a mind set against legal competition.

In addition to service with the Village Chapel and the Kiwanis Club of the Sandhills, Tufts has had time for his family. Along the way he picked up a wife, the former Helen Kohler of Long Island, N.Y., and they had three sons and two grandchildren. Son Robert lives in Florida, where he is in the resort development business at Palm Beach. James W. (Tim) Jr. is in Pinehurst, and John Frederick is associated with Moore Memorial Hospital.

Bridge Benefit Is Scheduled

This year, as in the past, a group of Moore County boys, ages 8 through 12, will head for the mountains of North Carolina to spend a few summer days at the Elks Boys Camp.

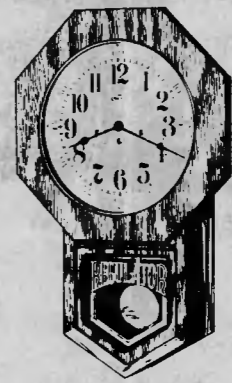
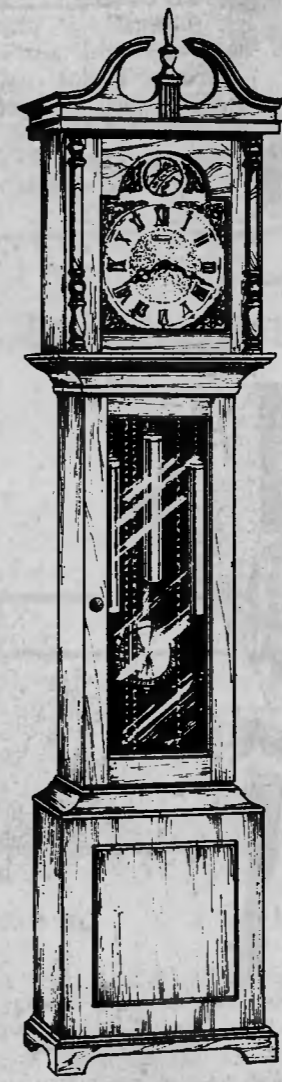
Providing these mini vacations is a philanthropy of the Elks Lodge in Southern Pines.

Local bridge players will have the opportunity to support this endeavor by attending a special duplicate game at the Elks Lodge and Country Club on Sunday May 31. This will be a two-session event, played at 1:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. Players may attend just one session, but, to be eligible for overall awards, must participate in both segments of the game.

And, because it is a charity affair, the American Contract Bridge League has authorized extra points for the winning teams.

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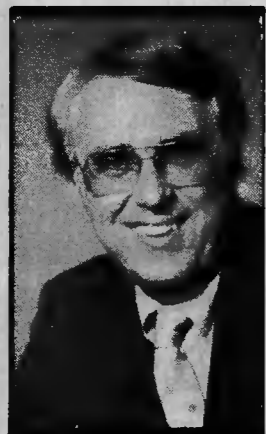
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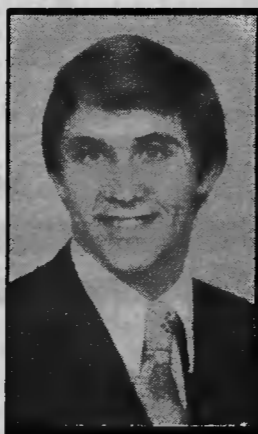
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