

Good news happens here!

## Meet Carl “Sandy” Dann, III, grandson of the man who founded Dubsdread Golf Course and Country Club 90 years ago

By ohtadmin on February 06, 2014

*This year marks the 90th anniversary of Historic Dubsdread, founded by H. Carl Dann, Sr., grandfather of Carl “Sandy” Dann, III, who today lives in the house his grandfather built on the golf course. Having lived in College Park since the age of four, Sandy experienced the then private golf club in the early days when some of the country’s most famous golfers played, where WWII pilots enjoyed R&R, and where gambling was rampant.*

### **How was the Dann family an integral part of the early development of Orlando and College Park?**

Actually both of my parents’ families were a big part of the early development of Orlando. My mother’s family, the Lawsons, settled here as well. You’ve heard of Lake Lawsona? My grandfather, William Clayburn Lawson, owned all of that area. He was a very elite and smart man who [was instrumental in starting] the first two-party system in the state of Florida and was the youngest person to pass the bar in Washington, D.C., when he was 19 years old. They didn’t really care for Orlando, so they ended up buying Stone Island, a 500-acre island on the St. John’s River, and developed that. It is beautiful up there. Their home is still there today.

My dad’s father, Carl Dann, Sr., was one of Orlando’s prominent builders, developing many neighborhoods and several golf courses in town. He was an innovator, but was not educated. His father died [while Carl was] in the first grade so he quit school and sold things out of a little cart he pushed around to help support his family. He then went back to school for one more year in the fourth grade. And that’s as far as he got.

### **So your parents’ families came from vastly different backgrounds. Did they get along?**

Not at all. There was total conflict between the families. Mother’s family was elite and educated. They were not happy when my mother wanted to marry my father. You had a Florida cracker against an erudite. They never spoke.

### **Your grandfather developed Dubsdread in 1924. How did your father, Carl Dann, Jr., come to own it?**

My grandfather gifted the course and club to my dad as a wedding gift in 1931. My dad was an incredible golfer, winning many amateur championships. It was a perfect fit. But he was also a big gambler, and there was a lot of that going on at Dubsdread.

### **Serious gambling?**

Big time. They were betting houses and everything. My dad lost the golf course several times. The mafia had a big presence here and was mixed up in all that.

[One man reputed to have mafia connections in] Chicago would come here in the wintertime and gamble in the back room at Dubsdread. My dad once lost the golf course to him. The shoeshine boy told my mother that he and his men were cheating. My mother, unbeknownst to my father, got on a train and went to Chicago, waltzed into his office, accused his men of cheating and demanded the golf course back. He gave it back, told her she was “a cheeky broad” and to go on home.

### **Do you share your father’s passion for golfing?**

No, I really don’t. In about the fourth grade I said, “Dad, I’d like to learn how to play golf.” He said, “OK, you will come home every day from school and the pros will work with you, then you will play 18 holes after that. Then you will play 36 holes on Saturday and Sunday.” I asked when I would have time to play and build tree forts and he said I wouldn’t. So I said, “Well, then I don’t want to play.” He said, “Good,” and turned around and walked away.

When I came home from prep school I did play with him a little.

### **What childhood memories stand out about growing up here?**

You have to realize, College Park was out in the boondocks. I remember walking to Princeton Elementary barefoot back through the woods on a dirt road. You couldn’t wear shoes because the sand was so deep that it was hard to walk in it with shoes on.

During the war, it was just bustling around here. Everyone built rooms onto their houses for soldiers to have a place to stay. I remember when the pilots would leave, they would fly over Dubsdread and clip the tree lines in their B-17s to say goodbye. Sadly, so many never came back. We lost so many of the best and the brightest. These guys were from New England, from Harvard and Yale.

### **Are any of your friends from childhood still around here?**

Just saw one, Chuck Myer, today as a matter of fact.

### **After being raised around land development and golf, how did you end up in the medical field?**

During the war my dad's two best friends were doctors. They were always around and ended up moving here after the war. In the sixth grade I started working in the hospital. I loved it. There were no medical schools in the state of Florida and only a couple of decent colleges. My mom felt I needed to go to Choate for high school so I would have a better chance at medical school. You wore a coat and tie 365 days a year and had study hall six hours a day with someone watching you. You were required to participate in athletics. It was serious stuff ... every day was full and busy. My first year I had a 42 average. I failed everything. These people had been in private schools and tutored all their lives.

### And they didn't kick you out?

For some reason they let me stay. The second year I made passing grades. The third year I made good grades. Then I ended up graduating *summa cum laude*. Fifty percent of my 132 classmates ended up as heads of big companies in the United States, and one became the head of Oxford. It was a great school. John F. Kennedy went there.

### Where did you go to college?

I got a nice scholarship to Yale, but I couldn't stand it. I'm a cracker boy. After the first year, and not seeing the sun for three months, I really didn't want to go back. I had a good friend who was a teacher at UNC Chapel Hill who told me that school would fit me better. It was perfect.

I started out in their medical school but was reminded that it would be hard to hunt and fish like I liked — and be a doctor. A friend told me I should be an orthodontist. I could see all my patients in a month, and then take a month off. That sounded great!

I ended up opening my practice here and retired when I was 70 and sold the practice to my son. And I did get to hunt and fish. A lot.

### What have you been doing in retirement?

[Sandy laughed as his wife Sheila announced from the background, "He's driving me crazy."]

First thing I did was buy a place in Uruguay to stay when I went there to hunt. We have since sold it, but I still go there. I love it there. I've given up on big game and just hunt birds now.

I had a book published last year, "Dreadful Errors in Judgment" [available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)] that tells about my hunting adventures and the mistakes I made that could have cost me my life. And Sheila's.

### Can you share an example?

Sheila and I were on our honeymoon in Africa and were coming out of the marsh with an animal I had been trying to find for years, a lechwe [antelope]. There are four subspecies of lechwe and I had collected the other three for museums. When we came out, there was a roadblock with six guys with machine guns. They wanted the animal. They held a gun to my wife's head and demanded it. It was very intense. Through our guide I made a joke [which was very funny but can't be published in this paper] that really made them laugh. We ended up negotiating for the meat.

### Is there anything left that you would like to do?

I have a 1,000-acre ranch outside of Sanford; we go there a lot. We will continue to go to Uruguay. But I've had a very full life. I've been on 15 trips to Africa, three to Mongolia, six all over Europe, been to half of the countries in South America, I have sailed all of the seas, all the way to the South Pacific.

### What about a book about Dubsdread?

Well, I've written one, but it's locked away for now. It will get published someday.

