For the second time in five years, the Golf Course Builders Association of America has tapped an educator to receive its annual Don A. Rossi Award, which honors "individuals who have made significant contributions to the game of golf and its growth."

Dr. James Beard, author of several basic texts and reference books on turfgrass management as well as hundreds of scientific papers and technical articles, will receive the award at the GCBA's Annual Awards Dinner in Orlando, Fla., Feb. 12.

Last year's honoree was Arnold Palmer. The only other educator to receive the Rossi was Dr. Joseph Duich, retired professor of turfgrass science at Penn State University, who guided the development of the "Penn" varieties of hybrid bentgrass. Duich was honored in 1995.

"Anything that is good for the game is good for those of us who create its venues," said Jim Kirchdorfer, president of ISCO Industries, of Louisville, Ky., and chairman of the GCBA Rossi Award Nominating Committee. "And Dr. Beard has been very good for the game of golf. He has greatly influenced the academic research that has given us the materials and techniques that literally make it possible to build golf courses on sites that would have been unthinkable a generation ago."

Beard, now president and chief scientist of the International Sports Turf Institute in College Station, Texas, is best known for his work during a 17-year career as a professor of turfgrass science at Texas A&M University. He founded the Institute when he retired from the university.

While at College Station, he developed and guided research programs in stress physiology and culture, shade adaptation and wear tolerance, among others. His 658-page text, "Turfgrass: Science and Culture," has been a standard reference work since it was published in 1973.

His latest major work is the second edition of "Turf Management for Golf Courses," scheduled for release early in 1999.

Even with more than 600 published titles to his credit, Beard sees himself first as an educator. While at Texas A&M — and Michigan State University before that — Beard taught undergraduate courses as well as mentoring 46 graduate students. He now lectures on turfgrass all over the world. Texas A&M honored him as Professor Emeritus of Turfgrass Science in 1993.