

# Who will carry the torch?

**T**wo of the pioneers of the golf course industry, Dr. Joe Duich and Dr. Jim Watson, passed away recently. Both men had a great impact on our industry including scientific advances, educating students and practicing professionals, instilling pride in the golf course industry, and creating an atmosphere of “we are all in this together” which carries on to this day.

One of many debts of gratitude that we all owe Drs. Duich and Watson was their commitment to developing the next generation of turfgrass scientists. So when people ask “Who are the next leaders in our industry?” thanks in part to Drs. Duich and Watson; the answer is right in front of us at universities and industries all over the country.

There are many fine turfgrass scientists at all stages of their careers working in academia and industry. This in itself is a tribute to Drs. Duich and Watson. When they started their careers you could count the number of turfgrass scientists on two hands. Today, the number of university educated turfgrass scientists numbers in the hundreds, and they are hard at work all across the country dedicated to improving turfgrass performance and advancing turfgrass science.

A few of the many talented and dedicated early or mid-career turfgrass scientists that are carrying the torch forward and keeping the turfgrass scientific community and the turfgrass industry thriving are mentioned briefly below. As with all lists, there is not space to recognize everyone who deserves a share of the spotlight. My apologies to the many fine scientists who are not listed in this column.

**Michelle DeCosta, Ph.D., University of Massachusetts.** If your golf

course is in the north, chances are you have lost annual bluegrass to winter injury. Michelle is working to improve our understanding of winter injury of annual bluegrass greens and hopefully how to minimize damage. Winter injury is a difficult research problem and Michelle is taking on this problem head-on.

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**Brian Horgan, Ph.D., University of Minnesota.** Brian was a voice of reason for the turfgrass industry during the efforts to ban phosphorus from turfgrass fertilizers in Minnesota. Thanks to his efforts, reasonable legislation was passed that all can make work. Brian is also very active in nitrogen management research that will cause those in northern states to rethink their nitrogen fertility programs.

**Doug Karcher, Ph.D., University of Arkansas.** If you want to learn more

about wetting agents, look for Doug’s research results on the subject. He has closely examined many aspects of wetting agent performance. Doug and colleagues have also developed a number of research techniques that lead to a more objective evaluation of turfgrass performance.

**Scott McElroy, Ph.D., Auburn University.** Scott is a leading turfgrass weed scientist responsible for developing strategies to control some of the toughest weeds like goosegrass and annual bluegrass. Scott and others are leading the charge to understand herbicide resistant annual bluegrass and what can be done to cope with this emerging problem.

**Doug Soldat, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin.** When it comes to turfgrass soil problems, chances are Doug has devoted time and effort to solving the problem. Doug’s research on phosphorus behavior in soil, turfgrass response to nitrogen applied in fall and late fall and wetting agents has changed how we maintain turfgrass and benefitted us all.

Drs. Stacy Bonos, Jim Brosnan, Kevin Frank, Dave Gardner, John Kaminski, Kevin Kenworthy, Jim Kerns, Aaron Patton, John Sorochoan, Brian Schwartz and Eric Watkins all deserve a share of the spotlight as well for their current and future contributions to the turfgrass industry.

I think Drs. Duich and Watson would be proud of the state of the turfgrass research community and they deserve a large portion of the credit for the research community and turf industry they helped shape.



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