

Keith Scott, CGCS, Receives 2009 MGCSA Distinguished Service Award

By LARRY G. VETTER
Twin City Seed Company

Receiving the Distinguished Service Award is the highest honor that is bestowed on an MGCSA member. I have known this year's recipient, Keith Scott, for over 45 years since we were classmates at Iowa State University studying Turfgrass Management. Since that time I've known him as a devoted family man, a dedicated golf course superintendent and it has been my good fortune to have him as one of my best personal friends.

His technical skills were initially demonstrated to me when Dr. Eliot Roberts, our turf advisor at Iowa State, pleaded with him to pursue graduate work in turf research instead of returning to the golf turf industry. The golf course maintenance profession, MGCSA, GCSAA, the USGA, other golf-related organizations and golfers in general have all benefitted greatly from his decision to decline that request, although who knows what industry advancements might have been made had he accepted it.

Keith has been working on golf courses for over 53 years. Born in Ontario, Canada, he worked at Westview Golf Club for nine years where he was involved in the installation of the first electric automatic irrigation system in that area.

He enrolled at the University of Guelph and graduated with an Associate Degree in Turf Management in 1964. While there he was Captain of the collegiate hockey team for two years. He then enrolled at Iowa State and upon his arrival there was some talk about starting a hockey team. The first night of tryouts over half of the people who showed up were wearing figure skates. As far as he was concerned the hockey team concept was immediately abandoned. Even without hockey he stayed and graduated in 1966 with a B. S. degree in Horticulture with a major in Turfgrass Management.

Prior to immigrating to the United States he did research work with the Quaker Oats Company on protein levels in Kentucky bluegrass. He also taught Turfgrass identification to undergraduate, Master's and Ph.D. students at the University of Guelph. He re-entered the golf industry when he was selected as the Assistant Superintendent at the Mississauga Country Club in Toronto in



MGCSA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

Keith Scott, CGCS, Oak Ridge Country Club, second from left, with his family at the MGCSA Awards and Recognition Banquet at Oak Ridge Country Club on December 9, 2009. Keith is pictured with his daughter Carla, son Kevin, and his wife Sandra.

1967. For those not familiar with Canadian golf, Westview and Mississauga are two of the top clubs in Canada.

In 1969, Keith immigrated to our good fortune when he accepted the Assistant Superintendent position at The Minikahda Club in Minneapolis. Working with the U. S. Immigration office I worked up what I thought was a highly technical job description including soil chemistry, plant physiology, pathology, microbiology and a number of other technical multi-syllable disciplines to indicate the requirements for the position. To our amazement, the job classification came back as "Seasonal Agricultural Worker." Who knows how long it would have taken to allow him to immigrate to the U. S. with a work visa. Fortunately, there was an avenue available that sped up the process significantly and it wasn't too long before he was able to emigrate to the U. S. and his turf career in this country began in earnest.

His first year at Minikahda he was amazed to find that we were still dry mixing Calo-Clor with Milorganite for snow mold protection. He convinced us to do

something that no one else had done in this area at that time - spray PMAS on fairways. Since this was a relatively new method for snow mold control, the recommended rates were much higher at that time than they were later when it became more commonly used. When spring arrived, it looked as though the fairways were all dead due to the phyto affects of the chemical. But, to Keith's credit, he was right and when warmer weather arrived they had come through the winter in great shape.

While at Minikahda, he taught Turfgrass Management at Anoka AVTI and was instrumental in designing that curriculum, much of which is still followed to this day. Two years later the Superintendent position at Oak Ridge Country Club became available. It was my honor to highly recommend him for that position and he was selected as their Golf Course Superintendent in 1971, the position that he has held ever since.

(Continued on Page 6)

Keith Scott, CGCS-

(Continued from Page 5)

Anyone who has ever played Oak Ridge or visited there over the course of Keith's career is undoubtedly aware of his ability to provide turf conditions that are second to none. In fact he was the first superintendent that I had ever heard of whose membership asked for the cutting heights to be raised on both greens and fairways! Of all of the improvements that he has made to the property since being at Oak Ridge, and there are many, he is especially proud of being involved in developing the current driving range complex that is immediately next to the clubhouse. It was a major renovation which is very impressive to see and is viewed as a huge improvement by the membership there.

Keith has not only been one of the top superintendents in the golf industry for all these years, he has shared his knowledge and expertise very generously. He has been an MGCSA and GCSAA member since 1969. He is also a member of the USGA and the O. J. Noer Foundation. He has served as the MGCSA Voting Delegate to GCSAA for sixteen years. He served on GCSAA's scholarship committee for four

years, its Membership Committee for two years and their Government Relations Committee for two years. In addition he was MGCSA's Treasurer for two years, served two terms as its President, served in other capacities on the Board and has chaired or co-chaired MGCSA's Scholarship Committee, the Water Resource Committee, the Research Committee, which he has served on from 1986 to the present, and was the Editor of *Hole Notes* for several years in the 1990s.

Keith worked very closely with Dr. Ward Stienstra, Plant Pathologist at the University of Minnesota doing snow mold trials on the 11th fairway at Oak Ridge for a number of years. He has also participated in testing products in the development process with The Toro Company. He was involved with Rotary for 10 years, did volunteer work for his church and has coached his son's hockey team.

It was quite a testament to his career at Oak Ridge that several of its current Board members attended the event as well as having their General Manager relay the appreciation of the Club during the program honoring him with the 2009 MGCSA Distinguished Service Award. In addition to the club officials who were there to

honor him, his wife Sandra and two of their children, Carla and Kevin also were in attendance.

It is impossible to adequately chronicle such an impressive career in a short article like this. However, it is possible to acknowledge the fact that Keith has had a distinguished career at one of the top clubs in this area, has provided playing conditions over many years that have been second to none and contributed greatly to our association and the industry in general. Along the way he has taught the finer points of Turfgrass Management to many and has shared his time and expertise to the benefit of us all. He is, without a doubt, one of the most deserving recipients of MGCSA's top award and will be missed when he retires later this year. However, the things he has taught us and demonstrated to us over his career will be remembered and will benefit MGCSA and the golf turf industry throughout this area for many years to come.

(Editor's Note: Author Larry Vetter, a former MGCSA president, is now affiliated with Twin City Seed Company.)

HARTMAN
Golf Course Construction
& Renovation

Quality since 1971...

Specializing in...

Bunkers • Tees • Laser Leveling • Green Drainage • Irrigation • Design • Pump Station Upgrades

8099 Bavaria Rd.
Victoria, MN 55386
952.443.2990

info@hartmancompanies.com
www.hartmancompanies.com