

Green industry legend to receive superintendents' highest honor

A giant figure in the history of the golf course and turf industries, Dr. James Watson, has been chosen to receive the Old Tom Morris Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

"Dr. Jim has been a great friend to GCSAA and its members for half a century," said GCSAA President Joseph G. Baidy, CGCS. "His career provides a perfect example of how one person can make a tremendous impact on an entire profession.



We are delighted to be able to pay tribute to the contributions he has made."

GCSAA established the Old Tom Morris Award in 1982 to recognize individuals who have made outstanding lifetime contributions to the game. The award is named in memory of Old Tom Morris (1821-1908), greenkeeper and golf professional at the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland.

Watson's influence has been felt throughout the entire turfgrass profession. Following military service in World War II, he earned a bachelor's degree in agronomy from Texas A&M in 1947. Watson obtained his doctorate in agronomy from the Pennsylvania State University in 1950.

As a graduate student at Penn State, Watson was the recipient of the United States Golf Association (USGA) Green Section fellowship and studied under the famed Dr. Burton Musser. He returned to A&M to serve as an assistant agronomy professor and conduct turfgrass research.

In 1952, Watson left A&M to begin his career with The Toro Company as director of agronomy. For over four decades with Toro, his research touched on nearly every aspect of turfgrass management. Later as the company's agronomist and vice president of customer relations, he led Toro's efforts in equipment development and evaluation, and served as the liaison to professional groups such as GCSAA.

Watson has received nearly every major accolade the industry has to offer, including the USGA Green Section Award (1976), the American Society of Agronomy's Agronomic Service Award (1977), GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award (1983) and the American Society of Golf Course Architects, Don Rossi Award (1994).

Watson is a fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and the Crop Science Society. He has served on the boards of the Sports Turf Managers Association, the Freshwater Foundation and the National Golf Foundation. Semi-retired now after 40 years with Toro, he currently serves on the planning council for the Irrigation Association and is agronomic coordinator for the seven 1994 World Cup soccer venues.

Watson joins Arnold Palmer; Bob Hope; Gerald Ford; Patty Berg; Robert Trent Jones; Gene Sarazen; Juan "Chi-Chi" Rodriguez; Sherwood Moore, CGCS; William Campbell; Tom Watson; Dinah Shore and Byron Nelson as recipients of the Old Tom Morris Award. The GCSAA Board of Directors selects the Old Tom winner.

Watson will be honored during the closing banquet of GCSAA's 66th International Golf Course Conference and Show on Feb. 27, 1995 in San Francisco.



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