

JAMES BLACKLEDGE RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The golf career of James Blackledge has span over fifty years. For this long dedicated service to the golf world the Palm Beach Chapter awarded him their distinguished service award.

Known to all as Jimmy he is a graduate of Kansas State University in his native state. His agronomy degree was very rare for the mid 1920's. He then moved to Mountain Lakes Golf Club in Lake Wales where he worked for several years. In 1929 he became the Superintendent of the prestigious Indian Creek Country Club, Miami Beach. He was there until World War II when he became the Army's field agronomist of all airports in the southeast. After the war he became the Jacobsen distributor for southeast Florida and worked for Rainbird Irrigation until his retirement. But his constant interest in the golf business led him to become only semi retired as he became involved with Southern Turf Nursery.

Jimmy has made his leading mark on our industry with his interest in turfgrass research and forming of professional organizations.

In 1946 Jimmy first visited the Everglades Experimental Station branch of the University of Florida at Belle Glade. Dr. Roy Bair was director. Dr. Bair says, "As a direct spinoff of the grass testing program for cattle and Jimmy's encouragement we were able in 1950 to release several new turfgrasses which were improvements on the old seeded bermuda." Once Jimmy had at Indian Creek, 206 grasses planted in observation plots. Several bentgrass varieties lived over two years.

May 6, 1939 he co-signed a letter inviting all interested superintendents in southern Florida to a meeting at his club. The purpose was to form a local superintendent chapter. This was the beginning of the South Florida GCSA, of which he was elected the 1st President. One interesting paragraph from the letter stated his open warm feeling that still prevails today. "We are very anxious to get organized and would like to see as large a group as possible at the May 13, 1939 meeting. All the men whose names are on the enclosed list have been invited. We would appreciate it so very much if you would ask anyone who has been overlooked to come and you if possible bring your assistants." In 1950 Jimmy was a leader in the formation of the Florida Turfgrass Association. He wanted us to "form our own group for political and research purposes." Until FTGA was established, superintendents were a division of the Florist Association. In 1960 he received FTGA's highest honor when he was awarded the "Wreath of Grass". He was the first recipient.

Jimmy Blackledge, the man, has established high personal qualities for all of us to achieve. His honest, sincere professionalism is a hallmark for all young superintendents.

The plaque was presented by James McGlocklin, executive director of GCSAA. The presentation met with a standing ovation. ■



Jimmy Blackledge receives Palm Beach GCSA Highest Honor.



Dr. Roy Bair pays tribute to Jimmy as the "Leading Superintendent that encouraged research in Florida."