

# 58th FTGA Annual Conference & Show

*By Joel Jackson*

Attendance numbers were up and all the trade-show booth space was sold out for the 58th edition of the FTGA Conference & Show Sept. 15-17 at the Caribe Royale Hotel in Orlando. By all accounts it was a successful event at a venue everyone had positive comments about.

The hotel rooms were all suites, the conference center layout was superb with the registration area immediately adjacent to the three meeting-room wings, the breakfast and lunch rooms and the trade-show ballroom. You never had to walk far to take care of business. The parking lot between the conference center and the hotel provided ample room for equipment displays and educational emergency spill response demonstrations.

Wednesday morning began bright and



*FTGA Past President Jan Beljan presented Matt Taylor, CGCS with the 2010 Wreath of Grass award at the FTGA Conference in Orlando. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

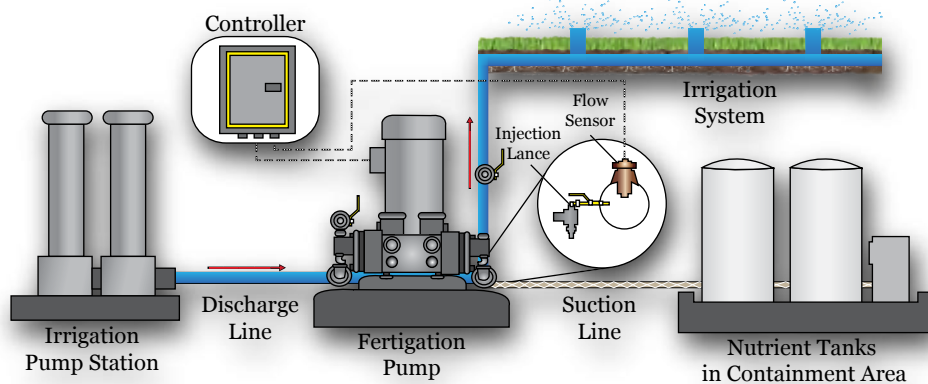
early with a free continental breakfast and educational sessions. The afternoon offered up the annual golf tournament with individual stroke and team scramble formats.

Mark Henderson won the individual event. He had already qualified for the FGCSA Golf Team, so the fourth member of the team will be the person with the low average score from the other qualifying events.

On Thursday morning, the traditional prayer breakfast was merged with the annual business meeting to free up the afternoon for a trade-show-only format, which definitely boosted the number of people browsing, dealing and networking on the show floor. Following the trade show, the Corn Boil and Live Auction were held on the Boca Patio at the hotel pool area.

On Friday morning, those needing core Pesticide CEUs to maintain their

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restricted pesticide licenses attended special classroom and outdoor hands-on demonstration training. There was also a class dedicated solely to academic and professional education of the turf students in attendance.

Highlights of the Conference included the presentation of the FTGA's prestigious Wreath of Grass Award in recognition of an individual's personal and professional dedication to Florida's Turf Industry. This year Matt Taylor CGCS, director of golf maintenance operations at the Royal Poinciana Club in Naples was the recipient. Golf Course Architect Jan Beljan presented the award and did a masterful job of keeping the audience guessing the winner's identity as long as possible until the record of service began to point undeniably to Matt's service to his peers and profession. The best part was when Matt's family was ushered into the rear of ballroom and got to share in the honor and totally surprise Matt.

Then it was back to business as the new officers and board members were sworn and significant changes to the bylaws were passed to create new membership categories to help get more people involved in the association to strengthen the industry. The new officers: President Mac Carroway, SMR Sod Farms; Vice President Armando Campos, Bayer Environmental Science; and Mac Briley, City of Ocoee Parks & Recreation Department.

Next former NFL player, and leading punter in his day, Herman "Thunderfoot" Weaver, gave an inspirational presentation about his personal journey of faith and mastering life's challenges. With humor and humility he recounted his trials and tribulations in his search for the life he was meant to lead. It was a message about never giving up or being afraid to ask for help.



*Star NFL punter Herman "Thunderfoot" Weaver gave a humorous and inspirational message at the combined FTGA Annual Meeting and Prayer Breakfast. Photo by Joel Jackson.*



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