



## Honorees cite challenge

TORONTO — Saying “it’s been a great run,” Canadian 1998 Superintendent of the Year Bob Heron told an audience here, “I still look forward to each day.”

Speaking at the 50th Canadian International Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show, Heron said “there’s still plenty of challenge” at Beacon Hall Golf Club, where he has

been superintendent since it opened in 1989.

He credited several people in his past, especially Penn State University professor Dr. Joe Duich and Jim Wyllie, whom Heron started working with in 1968.

Meanwhile, receiving the John B. Steele Award during the annual banquet of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA), Gordon Witteveen recalled his good friend Steele as a man who enjoyed life to its fullest. Steele and Witteveen were instrumental in founding the CGSA, and Witteveen said Steele would be “very happy and very proud” of Witteveen’s selection for the award.

## Eyeing retirement, Witteveen recalls ‘40 years of mistakes’

By MARK LESLIE

TORONTO — Toronto Board of Trade golf course superintendent Gordon Witteveen may be retiring Sept. 1, but he took the opportunity at the Canadian International Turfgrass Conference here to look back on his career with a frolicking talk called “Forty Years of Mistakes.”

Good-naturedly poking fun at himself, Witteveen told his audience: “I hope you can learn from my mistakes because I did not. I did not learn from my mistakes. One thing I did learn is that no matter how bad the mistake, the passing of time would soften the blow. A month, a year later, I would find myself laughing at it, and what once had been a serious matter [would bring] an amount of glee.”

Golfers at his 36-hole facility, he said, “have become less tolerant of my mistakes with the passing of time. Earlier in my career, I could get away with almost anything. Now there are many watching over my shoulder like vultures, ready to pounce when I do something wrong. I suppose it may have something to do with the fact that I keep a rather high profile, and when you do that, there is always someone waiting to knock you off your pedestal.”

Enumerating his mistakes, Witteveen mentioned:

- The 12th green which he rebuilt while working at Highlands Golf Club in London, Ontario. “I built it with a back-to-front slope that made it quite easy to putt into the front bunker.”
- The green he rebuilt which was used for the first time one Saturday. (“The greens committee held an emergency meeting that night. That new green was an eyesore on the golf course for many years.”)
- The tee box he built with a retaining wall. (“Golfers were petrified about falling off it.”)
- The new irrigation system he built using his own crew. (“That was a mistake. There was no one to blame and no one to sue.”)

After years of these experiences, Witteveen said, “I looked to get actively busy, so I’d make fewer mistakes. That’s when the Board of Trade job came along.”

Witteveen related some suggestions for what superintendents should do. First among them was to take many pictures of their work at their courses.

“Sometimes we don’t lose our jobs for agronomic reasons,” he said. “It’s because we do not smile.”

“Do not make the same mistake more than three times,” Witteveen said. “And when it is unavoidable, even admit to your mistake.”

After his retirement party on July 26 and actual retirement on Sept. 1, Witteveen will remain busy. The co-author of the popular new book “Practical Golf Course Maintenance — The Magic of Greenkeeping,” he has been asked by the CGSA to write a history of greenkeeping in Canada.

He and Michael Bavier, a friend and co-author of the greenkeeping book, plan to continue their global travels giving their Magic of Greenkeeping seminars from which the book was drawn.

## TURFSTONE™ TEE SIGNS



NEW!

### Our TurfStone™ Tee Signs are taken for granite all the time.

TurfStone gives you the look of granite you’ve always wanted,

but at a fraction of the cost. Laser-engraved graphics in up to

10 colors stand out on a composite material that’s virtually

indestructible. Looking for signs of distinction

for your course? Ask for Standard Golf.

Talk to your Standard Golf distributor today.

Or call 1-319-266-2638 for more information.

### STANDARD GOLF COMPANY

Cedar Falls, Iowa USA  
www.standardgolf.com



TurfStone Tee Signs can be mounted on three different post sizes ranging from 16” to 36”, so whether it’s high on the tee or low near the cart path, or as a complete console with ball washer and litter caddy, you’ll have the elegant look of granite at a fraction of the cost.