



O. J. Noer (left), to whom 31st GCSA convention was dedicated, holds granddaughter who was flown in with sister and brother and mother (back to camera) in "This Is Your Life, O. J. Noer," dramatization which climaxed annual banquet. Mrs. Noer, at right, greets her daughter as E. H. Griffith looks on Warren Lafkin (left background), played the Ralph Edwards role. Noer, agronomist with the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission for more than 35 years, is retiring in 1960. (Story on page 94)

# Houston Convention

*Well planned education and social programs, Texas hospitality, made 31st GCSA show one to be remembered*

**A**LTHOUGH attendance at the 31st International Turfgrass conference and show of the GCSA, held early in February in Houston, fell about 200 short of the record established the previous year in Chicago, the event was typical of the educational, business and social success that course supts. have come to expect of their annual assemblies. Nearly 1,475 supts., agronomists, manufacturers' reps and others interested in turf registered at the Shamrock-Hilton for the six-day affair. More than 200 wives accompanied their husbands. Houston's weather was not quite as balmy as the conventioners had hoped it would be, but its hospitality, in

which it takes much greater pride, more than supplied any warmth that didn't show up in the thermometer.

The conference, theme of which was "The Complete Course," was dedicated to O. J. Noer, Milwaukee Sewerage Commission agronomist, who has spent more than 35 years helping supts. to grow the superior turf which distinguishes courses in the U. S., and who is scheduled to retire this summer. The dedication was appropriately climaxed as the photo and caption on this page show.

The education program was spread out over six sessions, described on the following pages. Social activities included a com-

plete round of shows, sightseeing trips, teas, etc. for the wives of the supts. There was also a big hospitality hour, sponsored by manufacturers and the association, for all attending the convention, a golf tournament for the supts., the annual banquet and various other kinds of entertainment.

### First Session

## Mayor Gives City's Key to Elmer and Conference Is On

The opening session, which was held on Monday morning, was in charge of Tom Leonard, supt. at River Oaks in Houston, who is a transplanted Oklahoman. Among those who he introduced during the pre-lunch gathering were A. W. (Al) Crain, agronomist for Goldthwaite Texas Toro, also a transplanted Oklahoman, and George Aulbach, a Texas pro (Lufkin CC), by way of Boston. Besides these immigrants, the greensmen heard John Outland, Dallas CC club mgr. and Mel Warnecke, of Atlanta's East Lake.

These speakers followed Mayor Louis Cutrer of Houston who presented the GCSA's outgoing pres., Elmer Border, the keys to the city, promised to void any parking tickets that the conventioners collected during their Houston sojourn and in typically proud Texas fashion, described the glories of the Lone Star state and, of course, Houston.

Al Crain showed films of courses in Houston, Beaumont, San Antonio and Austin and discussed the general weather, topography and soil features of Gulf Coastal areas and those that are within 200 miles of the Gulf. He predicted that the bent green line that stops with Dallas will be extended several hundred miles farther south in the next four or five years, thanks to experimental work that is now being extensively carried on in several southern states. Dallisgrass, Crain stated, continues to be the curse of the man who manages fine turf in Texas, while in the last few years, supts. in and around Beaumont and Houston have been handicapped in the spring, and even in the fall, by an abundance of rainfall that often seriously interferes with mowing.

### Must Hear Out Complaints

Jack Outland, who presented the manager's outlook on the country club situation, suggested that men of his calling, as well as professionals and supts., should resign themselves to the fact that part of

their pay at least is for the roles they play as "professional listeners to complaints." If we can live with that attitude, Outland observed, we'll not end up in a pile of ulcers. The Dallas club mgr. said that, in reality, members generally are easy to get along with and that too many club employees make the mistake of remembering only the grouzers.

Speaking of personnel problems, Outland declared that too many clubs hire non-supervisory help rather haphazardly, don't make clear what is expected of these people and don't tell them what is due them in the way of benefits. If more pains



Mel Warnecke



George Aulbach

were taken in hiring, particularly by the mgr. and supt., Outland added, more loyalty to the clubs would be developed.

### Joint Responsibility

In discussing what players want in a course, George Aulbach opined that if the first tee is kept free of debris, people get the immediate impression that the entire layout is tidily maintained. This puts them in the proper frame of mind to start out with, George continued, and may result in their viewing the rest of the course with a less critical eye. Aulbach believes that the pro should be equally responsible with the supt. for keeping the No. 1 tee area properly policed.

The Lufkin CC pro said that on most courses he has seen there are far too many signs. He favors a movement that will do away with about 60 or 70 per cent of them. If major changes in local ground rules are made, he said, the pro and supt. would do well to notify members of these by letter rather than by posting signs which usually aren't heeded anyway.

In the matter of maintenance for play, Aulbach stated that he feels that a majority of supts. could do a better job on practice greens. Fairways and regular greens