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KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D., *Science Editor*

A catalyst of turf research

A book titled, "Turfgrass History and Literature" by James B Beard, Harriet J. Beard and James C Beard will be released this spring. I have not yet purchased a copy of the book, but given the history of Dr. Beard, I have no doubt that "Turfgrass History and Literature" will be a thorough and comprehensive review of the history of lawn, golf and sports turf.

No one is better suited, or more qualified to write on the history of turfgrass than Dr. James B Beard (Jim). He is an iconic figure who did more to put the "science" in turfgrass than anyone I know. His past personal and professional friendship with Dr. James Watson of The Toro Company during the 1960s and 1970s spurred a combination of academic and commercial knowledge and innovation that propelled the golf industry forward.

Dr. Beard's credentials include publishing over 265 scientific articles, seven books, educating graduate students who became leaders in academia and the industry, being a driving force in the foundation of the International Turfgrass Society and becoming a fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and Crop Science Society (in less than 10 years) to name a few.

Given all of his accomplishments, it is one book published over 40 years ago, "Turfgrass: Science and Culture," that was the seminal piece of work that became the bible of science and turfgrass for college students and industry professionals.

Jim wrote the book "Turfgrass: Science and Culture" during a 10- to 13-year period of time while at Michigan State University when he was not only involved with the activities listed above, but the additional commitments of teaching, doing a National Science Foundation Post-Doctoral study, traveling and speaking. Jim later moved to Texas A&M and continued at a level of high productivity.

Jim grew up in a small farming community outside of Dayton, in Bardonia, Ohio. He received his bachelor's degree in Agronomy from The Ohio

State University. A little known story from Jim's undergraduate days is that he was recruited to play football by Woody Hayes. Jim declined in order to concentrate on his studies. If you have met Jim or seen him, you can tell by his stature that he could have been a heck of a defensive end or left tackle.

Jim received his graduate degrees from Purdue University. In 2004 Purdue University honored Jim with their highest award, Honorary Doctorate.

As a professor, Jim immediately demonstrated the ability to impact the science of turfgrass. Jim's ability to "ruffle feathers" of graduate students who presented papers (including mine) at the Agronomy Society of America is legendary. His famous questioning was never mean spirited, just targeted so that he could know more about the research. I believe some took his criticisms as unfair, but I know from his former graduate students that he expected a lot from them; the same as he expected from himself and as an extension, all turf graduate students. He was a catalyst that took turfgrass research, at that time, to a new level.

Although intimidating on the outside, I have always found Jim to be a softy. He has always cared deeply about his students and the people who make their livelihood in this industry. Jim cares so much for all of us that I think in a strange way, it is a burden on him.

As a final thought before I order my copy of "Turfgrass History and Literature," Jim and his wife Harriet have been battling illness these last few years. Jim is currently recovering at home from a recent illness. If you find the time, whether you know him or not, drop him a note. I know he will appreciate it.

Karl Danneberger, Ph.D., *Golfdom's* science editor and a professor at The Ohio State University, can be reached at danneberger.1@osu.edu.