



CONTRIBUTORS

By Michael Semler



It is always enjoyable to pay your respect to a member who has just received the Distinguished Service Award from the WGCSA. So few have received it, that those who are members of that elite club certainly have deserved it. Our hats are off to Rodney Johnson for all he has contributed over the years, and for all he will undoubtedly contribute in the coming years. Just remember, old guys never fade away, they just keep contributing!!

While I am speaking of contributing, how about a hearty thank you to all of those clubs who make annual contributions to support turfgrass research. Whether it is through a line item in their budget or through donations by other means, their silent and dutiful bestowals should not go unnoticed nor unreported. They are also in a class above the rest!

And let us not forget all of the distributors of turf equipment and supplies. For years, they also have silently supported the turfgrass industry and its research. Often the only recognition was a mere round of applause at a symposium or conference. Where would we be without their generous contributions?

Now as I tell you of these wonderful leaders and contributors, it seems

I must also tell you that their support for the turfgrass industry is just not enough. In fact, what they need is help! Not only do they need help from their peers, but help from the true benefactors of their work—the golfers.

It seems that the golfing public does not understand the need for turfgrass research and the need for money to support it. And therein lies the problem. How do we get the golfers, who are playing on the grass we grow and who are the true benefactors of turfgrass research, to help support this research?

Hypothetically, if Wisconsin had 300 clubs, and each club had 250 members who were each willing to donate a single dollar to support research, we would reap in \$75,000. Wow!!! In short order and with very little pain, we would have a large sum of money to work with. Do you think we could find useful projects for this money at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research Facility? I do.

But this leads to some logistical problems. Foremost among them are getting golfers to realize the need for the money, coming up with a means of billing and collecting the money from them, showing them what their money has purchased, and making

sure we can count on their annual support.

I know many others have tried to get this type of involvement from the golfers and their respective clubs with little or no success. But the fact of the matter is that in order to gain the potential bounty of turfgrass research, we need more help in finding these contributors.

Since we do not have a defined means of collecting money from golfers as a whole, the job of finding these needed contributions rests on the shoulders of the golf course superintendent. We must be the ones to take it to our members and make them understand the importance of research and the need to support it. We must be the ones to show them the kind of research that is going on and what needs to be done in the future. We must be the ones to show them that a dollar from every golfing member is a small amount to pay when talking about the total operations of the club and the beneficial results that come from supporting research. And finally we must be the ones to show them the importance research plays in the overall future of golf.

If we don't do it, nobody else will. 🍷



Steve Scoville