

Kussow Honored At Field Day 2000

By **Monroe S. Miller**, Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club



Dr. Wayne R. Kussow was honored by the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association on August 8th at the 2000 Field Day with the announcement that the first of four Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships in Turfgrass Science will be named for him. Professor Kussow was visibly touched by the recognition.

The WTA was formed in 1980 by a broad base of turfgrass professionals with the expressed purpose of supporting turfgrass research at the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

That support has taken many different forms over the years. One of the first actions was to purchase a pickup truck to alleviate hassles for faculty with the University fleet. The WTA has awarded hundreds of undergraduate scholarships, graduate student assistantships, and direct grants to the research faculty. It has provided everything from student labor to data loggers. And foremost of the WTA efforts was raising money from 1987 - 1990 to build the wonderful turfgrass research facility that was named for O.J. Noer. The Noer Facility was a gift from the WTA to the University and despite the ten years that have passed since its opening it remains among the best, if not the best, turfgrass research facility in the country.

In the middle 1990s, the WTA established the O.J. Noer Development Fund at the University of Wisconsin Foundation, looking to the future and trying to position the turf industry with an opportunity to help itself when needed and when the time was right. Last year, the time got right. As a result of plan-

ning by the UW Foundation, the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) and the UW graduate school, the Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship Program became available.

The officers and directors of the WTA were excited by the chance to double its money through the Fellowship Program and provide financial support, in the form of grad students, for perpetuity. It clearly is a rare opportunity. The association signed on and has dedicated itself to filling four fellowships, one each for the departments of Soil Science, Horticulture, Plant Pathology and Entomology.

The first of these Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships will be in the Soil Science Department. This storied department is where O.J. Noer was educated as an undergrad and as a graduate student. It is the department where the UW - Madison turfgrass program began under the firm hand and strong guidance of Dr. James R. Love. Dr. Leo M. Walsh was CALS dean when the development of the Noer Facility took place; he spent his career in the Soil Science Department. And it is the department of Dr. Wayne R. Kussow, who succeeded Dr. Love and who has done so much for the turfgrass industry in Wisconsin for the past nearly two decades. Wayne has been the glue for the turfgrass program during its time of retirements and new hires and transition.

There are a lot of reasons why Wayne has been so respected in the Wisconsin turfgrass industry. In many ways, he is the quintessential Wisconsin person. He was

born and raised on a dairy farm near Oconto, in northeast Wisconsin; he attended our land grant university in Madison for a B.S. degree in 1961, a M.S. in 1963, and a Ph.D. in 1966. Except for a brief one and a half years at the University of Delaware, he has been on the Wisconsin faculty since graduating.

The year 1983 was a lucky year for us - Wayne did some research for MMSD, his first foray into turf. He studied and surveyed the science and when Dr. Love retired in 1986, Wayne assumed control of the program. It was our collective good luck he chose that career path.

In the years since 1983, Wayne's contributions have been formidable. He is a brilliant scientist and investigator; evidence of that abounds in the field trials at the Noer Facility and in his labs on campus. He is an excellent teacher as students of his will testify, and his writing in the journals we read is the best - clear, concise, to the point. He isn't bound by traditional or accepted practices, always questioning and encouraging us to do the same. Maybe what many of us appreciate most about him is his accessibility - Dr. Kussow is never more than a phone call away.

With these thoughts in mind, the WTA asked, "Why wait until Dr. Kussow retires to honor him? Why not now?" As a result, from August 8, 2000 forward, for all time, the first turfgrass Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship will be known as the WAYNE R. KUSSOW Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship, telling future generations the high respect we have for this man. ♣