

Welch Passes Away; Provided Strong Support to Wisconsin Superintendents



By **Wayne Otto**, Turfgrass Support Services

Bob Welch passed away on Saturday, May 17 at 74 years of age. He was a long time MMSD and Milorganite staff person in the time of O.J. Noer, Charlie Wilson and Jim Latham. Bob was a member of the USGA, the Wisconsin Public Links Association and the Whitnall Park Men's Golf Association. He was also a member of the WGCSA and a strong supporter of our organization. During the years he was working he regularly attended our meetings. Bob also played a key role in the O.J. Noer Research Foundation (he was the secretary) and in the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium.

Once upon a time I told Bob that, "I wasn't going to go to a particular meeting because it was too far to travel." He told me that I better attend that meeting because the superintendent at that course was a

strong support of the Wisconsin GCSA.

Soon after moving to Wisconsin from Nebraska, I met Bob while sharing a ride to a WGCSA meeting at Tuscumbia Golf Course with Joe Deschler and Bill Sell. After a little bit of a rocky start we really became good friends.

Everyone knew O.J., Charlie and Jim, but who was Welch? He was the guy at Milorganite who wrote recommendations after studying the laboratory analysis of the soil samples that I had sent from my course in Nebraska. When I figured out who Bob was, my response to him right out of the gate was, "Oh, you are the guy that made my greens alkaline." Even though I was kidding, he was very offended by my remark.

We used to get together and drive to Chicago to

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attend the two-day clinic at Medinah CC in the late fall. After the educational sessions we would go hit the bars, shoot pool and talk smart. One night he got really mad at me after I told him that I was thinking about mixing some Nitroform fertilizer with Milorganite. Bob got all excited and told me that I would be better off not to experiment with that stuff. He was not a "whiner" but did worry about things like that.

Roger Schultz (Les VerHaalen's son-in-law) hosted a monthly meeting at Pine Hills CC in the 1970s, prior to Rod Johnson's arrival. The carload included Jim Latham, Bob, myself and someone else (I cannot remember who the fourth person was). We drove to Sheboygan, attended the late-morning education

meeting, had lunch and played golf. After golf, we had several beverages and when we finally did leave Pine Hills it was dark and very foggy. Somehow we made it back home, driving the green Milorganite Chevy station wagon real slowly in the fog. When we got to Mequon, we discovered that the tailgate had been open for the entire trip. Surprisingly, we didn't lose a single golf club!

Bob is survived by three children, seven grandchildren and one great grandchild. I am so pleased that I had the opportunity to know Bob Welch. There were many good times and wonderful memories. We will truly miss Bob. ♣

