



A Big “Thank You” for Wayne Kussow

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

Many of you will remember the Wisconsin Turfgrass Field Day in 2000. It was memorable for a lot of reasons, but mostly because we honored Wayne Kussow and his very distinguished career as a faculty member of the University of Wisconsin - Madison with a fully funded Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship named for him. For all time there will be a graduate student in the Department of Soil Science with a research project that will advance the turf industry in Wisconsin. From August 8, 2000 forward, people will be reminded of the high regard we held for Wayne during his time on the faculty. Really, there could be no greater way for us to express that respect and esteem we have for Wayne Kussow than this. And we didn't wait for his retirement - or worse, his passing - to make that happen, so strong were our feelings of gratitude.

Wayne Kussow, as I have thought about it, is the quintessential Wisconsin man. He grew up on a dairy farm in northeast Wisconsin, one of five boys. He graduated from Oconto Falls High School and decided to attend Wisconsin's Land Grant University in Madison where he earned three degrees in Soil Science - a BS in 1961, a MS in 1963 and a PhD in 1967.

His faculty career at Wisconsin is really in two parts — international agriculture and turfgrass science. You may not be aware of his accomplishments before he came to us. He was an assistant professor of soil science at Porto Alegre in Brazil, a senior research advisor in Brazil, as well as a rice research advisor there. He worked for USAID in Nigeria and Indonesia and was with the UW - Madison Land Tenure Center in the Dominican Republic. He also was a professor at

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the University of Delaware in the late 1960s. In the early 1980s he was the associate director of the International Agriculture Program for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

And then, thanks to the wisdom and foresight of Dr. James R. Love, Wayne was approached and asked by him to consider assuming Love's responsibilities for the University of Wisconsin turfgrass science program. That was in 1985. When Wayne agreed to do that, the second half of his career began.

Regardless of what Wayne's official appointment assignment has been over the intervening years, he spent his time well in teaching, research and extension. Teaching in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences carries with it serious responsibilities for undergraduate advising. Wayne has a group of advisees each semester - usually 25 to 35 students - who likely appreciate him the most for the good advice he gives them. His office door is ALWAYS open and he is available to students whenever he is there. He, in many ways and for many kids, makes this very large university more like the small town many of them grew up in. He is so friendly and compassionate and insightful. His former students are his biggest fans for a good reason. The CALS recognized him a few years ago with the College Advisor of the Year award. Also, Wayne has been the advisor to the Badger Turf and Grounds Club since 1985, giving him 20 years in that voluntary position.

Many faculty, I'm sure you have read and heard, dislike teaching and the attending classroom activities. Not Wayne. He has taught Soil Science 301 for years and years, and has taught other courses in soil fertility and plant nutrition. He has also been a short course instructor.


Wayne brings a powerful intellect to our profession through his research. And the good science he has done, both in the field and in the lab, always had as its end goal, help for us, the end users. The dedication he has shown to us demonstrates his belief in the Wisconsin Idea, the notion that the boundary of the campus is actually the boundary of the state. Whether it was research concerning runoff studies, root zone amendments, plant nutrition and fertilizer or soil testing, Wayne has had our welfare in his mind always.

The outreach activities of Dr. Kussow, often on his own time, may inspire and impress me the most. He gives freely and generously of that time and gives us straight answers. His writing in our industry publications, especially the GRASS ROOTS and the WISCONSIN TURFGRASS NEWS, is clear, concise, logical and flawless. The advice he has given to us over the years has traveled all over the country and been taken by colleagues in many other states. As a long time editor, I can tell you I NEVER change a word in any


manuscript Wayne submits for publication, other than to insert "Dr." before his name on the author line, which he also NEVER does!

We have all heard Dr. Kussow speak many times and in many places. Many of us have called his office for help and then experienced the relief that comes when he drives to our golf courses and sod fields or whatever our place of business might be to see if he can help. It is no wonder Wayne is revered by everyone in our industry.

Wayne has had an exceptional career, but what else would you expect from such an exceptional man? We were fortunate to have had him in our midst for the last twenty years. It really is nearly impossible to express our gratitude, but we want to give Wayne and Carol Kussow a gift of travel as a token of our thanks. Travel and trips can make for some great memories, and our hope is that they will hang some of those memories on the walls of their favorite rooms at home and be reminded of how much we thought of this former farm kid from Oconto County. ♣



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