



Berbee Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship Established at the University of Wisconsin - Madison

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

The formal acknowledgement of the fourth Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship in Turfgrass was an event like few I have experienced in my career.

The Jim Berbee and Karen Walsh Foundation fully funded a fellowship in turfgrass pathology in honor of Jim's parents, John and Flora Berbee. Jack was a career professor in the Department of Plant Pathology who studied forestry pathology, mycology and virology. Flora Berbee worked on the serious problem of oak wilt in the department and was a well-known laboratory instructor. Their long and productive careers at Wisconsin certainly merit the recognition and respect the fellowship will provide.

My life intersected with the Berbees in a number of ways. Right after I was hired as the golf course superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club in 1972, I bought a home a few blocks from the golf course on Tomahawk Trail. My next-door neighbors to the west were the Berbees. Next door to the east was Edith Jones. Although in her 80s, she was still abstracting professional and academic journal articles for the plant pathology department. She had earned her M.S. there in the early years of the department and her husband, Dr. Fred Jones, was a renowned plant pathologist as well. Incidentally, cater-corner from our house was Mike Lee's family.

Needless to say, in the five years we lived in that home, I learned a lot about plant pathology and the department at the UW - Madison. Both Mike and Jim worked at our golf course, back in the time when 14-year olds could do anything an



Dr. Bob Ray, Associated Dean of CALS, formally thanked Flora and Jack Berbee for their productive careers in CALS.



A very proud Berbee family!

adult was allowed to do on the course. They have been life long friends. Mike, of course, pursued a successful career after he earned his degree in turfgrass management at the UW - Madison. Jim was a graduate of the College of Engineering, attaining both a B.S. and a M.S. in mechanical engi-

neering, and later a MBA. He started a high tech communications company that became very successful. He sold it recently and decided to fund a turfgrass fellowship in his parents' name. By the way, Jim is headed to Stanford University to attend medical school and begin his second career!

We had a recognition party at our clubhouse on June 21st. Many of the emeritus plant pathology faculty were there, as were current faculty. The WTA was well represented and the CALS staff and Dean's office were present. The WGCSA had a presence, the Berbee family came from great distances, and old friends from the neighborhood made the trip to the promontory where the clubhouse sits overlooking Lake Mendota. Grass and trees and water were visible from every window.

The University of Wisconsin Foundation planned the event and did a wonderful job, as always. We had a grand time - good food, good friends, a great cause in honor of a great family.

So here we are as we near the end of the fellowship program -



Dr. Paul William reflected on Jack and Flora Berbees' careers in plant pathology.



Present chair of Plant Pathology, Dr. Murray Clayton, offered congratulations to the Berbees.

\$2,000,000 endowed money to support four graduate students in the turfgrass sciences at all times for all time. We have a few months

left to try and fill the one fellowship remaining that is available to us. I hope we are successful.

I would enjoy another party! 🌱

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