

Dr. James R. Love

By David Brandenburg, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

Dr. James R. Love passed away on Tuesday February 25, 2014 at the age of 93. Dr. Love was the father of turfgrass management in Wisconsin and is responsible for molding so many of the industry leaders.

James was born in 1920 on a farm outside of Rugby, North Dakota and grew up with two brothers and a sister. After high school he took a year off to mend a leg that was broken in a football injury that required 4 surgeries before he attended North Dakota State Agriculture College. There James received a bachelor's degree in chemistry before moving to Chicago to work in the research department of the large meat packing firm Armour and Company.

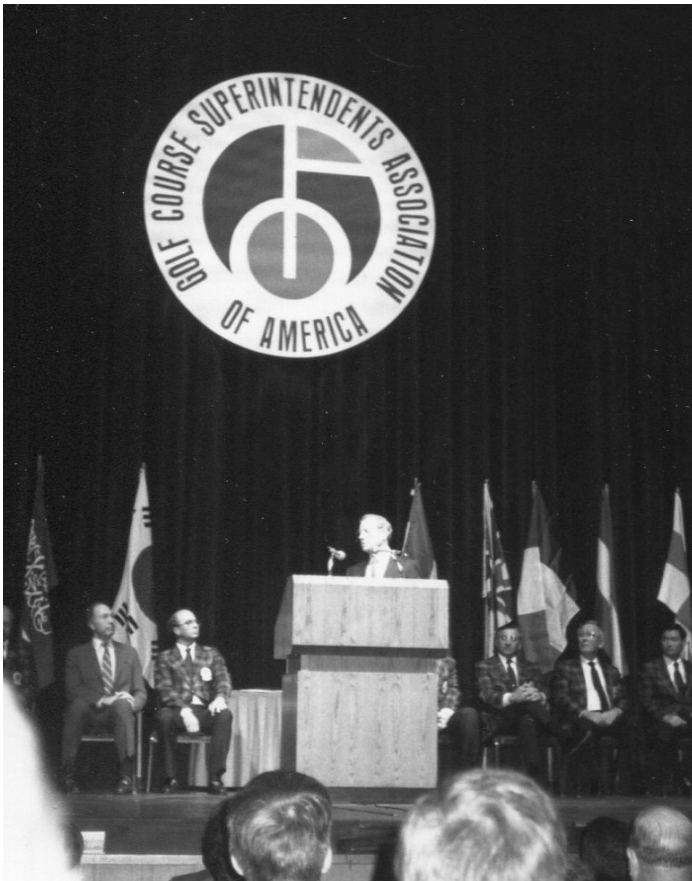
After 3 years at Armour Jim could see that to get anywhere with research he would need a higher degree and deciding teaching was his real passion he returned to North Dakota.

There he attended Minot State University and not only received his teaching accreditation but also met and married his wife Nancy. With teaching on their minds they moved to Browning Montana in 1950 to teach on the Black Feet Indian Reservation. Jim taught science and math while Nancy taught Kindergarten and first grade. Although they enjoyed teaching according to Jim "They paid me enough to babysit but not enough to teach" so they headed to Madison so Jim could attend graduate school at the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Jim said "I was E.J. Pappy Gaul's last teaching assistant in what was then Soils 101." "I am real proud of that. Pappy Gaul was one of the most marvelous old teachers. Everyone in the state of Wisconsin who every took a short course or long course in soils took Pappy Gaul's Course."

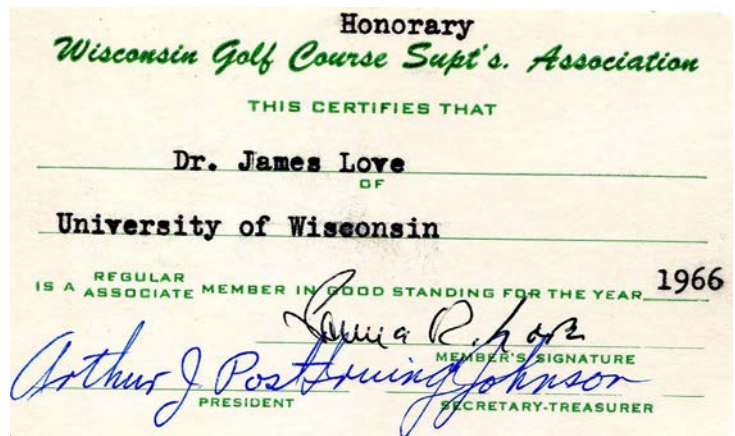
After Jim received his MS in soil physics in 1953 he was asked to teach Gaul's old course soils 101 even though he only had a masters degree. For his PhD work Jim switched to soil fertility and plant nutrition. By then Jim and Nancy had two boys and it was a struggle for Jim to work a job and try to finish his PhD thesis with the distractions in the house. To help, Nancy and the boys took a vacation to Jim's parents house in St. Paul and he closed the shades of the apartments and got to work. In 1956 Dr. Love had his PhD degree and was promoted to an assistant professor with a 85% instructor assignment.

This put Dr. Love in the position to be part of a 1959 meeting between Dr. O.J. Noer and the then chair of the Department of Soil Science Dr. L.E. Engelbert. O.J. was nearing the end of his career and became convinced the advancement of golf course

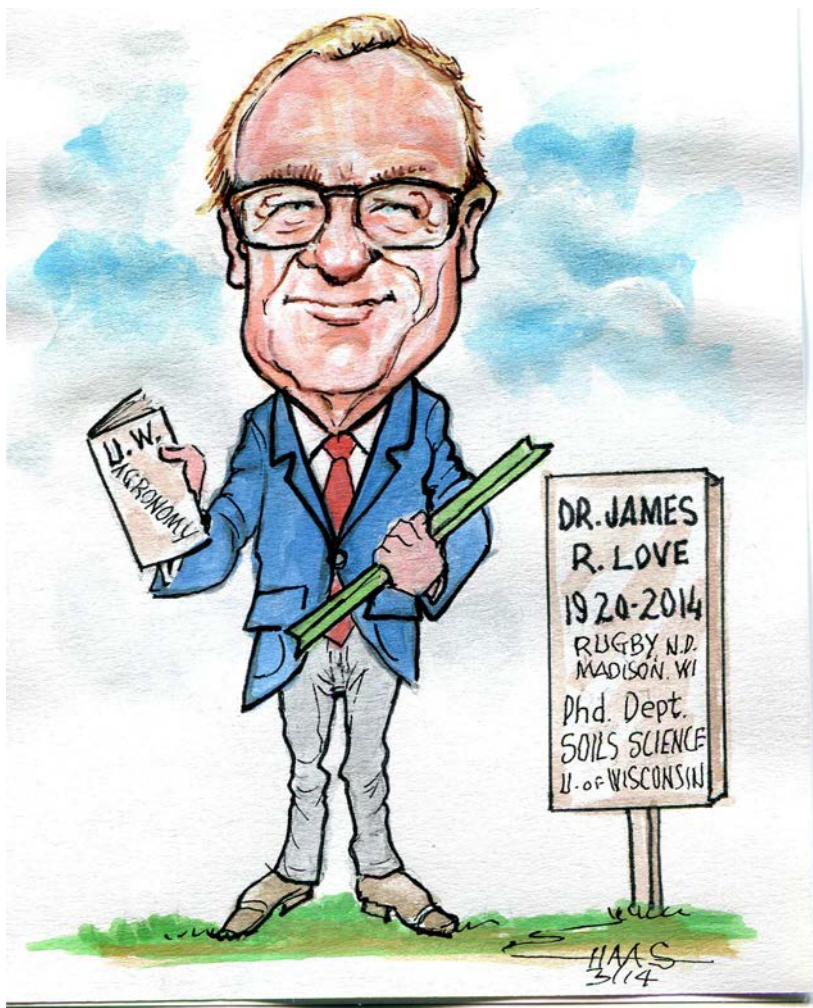


Dr. Love at the 1987 GCSAA Conference where he received the Colonel John Morley Distinguished Service Award with David S. Gourley Sr. one of the founders of the Canadian Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Second to the left of Dr. Love is Bart Star who was the guest speaker that night.



Dr. Love's WGCSA membership card from 1966. The card was signed by President Arthur Post and Secretary Irving Johnson.



The drawing on the left was submitted by Gene Haas, retired director of the Wisconsin State Golf Association. Gene wrote:

March 3, 2014,

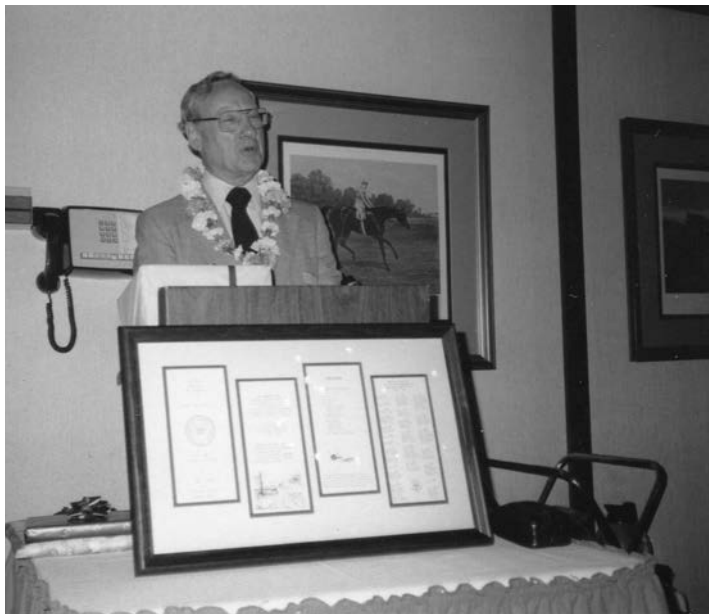
Dr. James R. Love was truly a legend in his own time and a great contributor to the game of golf during his long tenure with the U. of Wisconsin's Soils Science Department.

He will be missed...

From a long time admirer.

Gene Haas

WSGA (retired)



Dr. James R. Love during his retirement party. He was presented with the framed and matted copy of the evenings program seen in front of him.



Dr. Love at a soils department holiday party.

COVER STORY

management relied in superintendents being formally trained at the collegiate level. Considering O.J. received his B.S. and PhD at UW he was convinced the school should become a leader in the industry.

Dr. Love was excited to begin the program and with consultation from O.J. and others he developed a curriculum in turfgrass management.

Dr. Love tried to convince the leaders of the horticulture and agronomy departments to support the program but they wanted nothing to do with it. Administration said there wasn't anything they could do in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences but they could do anything they wanted in the Soils Department.

The Turf and Grounds Management Program (actually a specialization in Soil Science), became a formal program in 1961. The first two students graduated in 1964. Dr. Love continued to guide the program and advise all of the students in the program until his retirement in 1986.

During his 23 years with the turfgrass program Dr. Love advised 105 students many of whom are on the who's who list of golf course superintendents. As an advisor Dr. Love made sure all his students received work experience while going to school. Jim would personally take stu-

dents out and introduce them to the golf course superintendent.

When you look at the history of the WGCSA so many present and past leaders are the result of mentoring from Dr. Love.

Monroe Miller explained Dr. Love's character when he explained Dr. Love told him "You can't pay me back; you can only pass it on to those who come after you." Many of Dr. Love's students are still paying it forward 28 years after his retirement.

As retirement neared Jim was clear to say "No retirement party for me." Well that was not going to happen so as expected a surprise party was thrown in his honor. Dr. Love may have not wanted a party but he shared "The most marvelous evening in the entire world was that May 18th, 1986."

Dr. Love left the program in the good hands of Dr. Wayne Kussow after working together for a year. After retirement Jim made a clean break and did not want to be looking over Dr. Kussow's shoulder.

Dr. Love was awarded the GCSAA Distinguished Service Award and the GCSAA Colonel John Morley Distinguished Service Award in 1987. The Dr. J.R. Love Scholarship was also started shortly after he retired to be awarded to one of the top turf students each year. The award is fund-

ed by the WGCSA.

Jim and Nancy traveled and enjoyed themselves in retirement. In a 1992 interview Jim said "My retirement is so good, I tell you, I have to pinch myself. I think I've died and gone to heaven. It is marvelous. I enjoy every day."

Dr. Love also enjoyed reading, cards and gardening. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, his sons John and Peter and his granddaughter Amanda.

Jim truly was the father of turfgrass maintenance in Wisconsin and although losing a parent is hard we will remember and carry on with the lessons they taught us. 🌱

References:

Haas, Gene. Caring For The Green, The History of The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association. Brookfield: WGCSA, 2005

Bocher, Lori Ward. *Even His Name Shows His Love For Life. The Grass Roots* July, 1992: p. 10-12

<http://soils.wisc.edu>. *History of the UW-Madison Turf and Grounds Management Program in the Department of Soil Science*



Jim and Nancy enjoying themselves at Jim's retirement party in 1992