

THE ROLE OF THE GCSAA IN MICHIGAN TURFGRASS DEVELOPMENT

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Members of the GCSAA have always been strong in their support of the turfgrass development and research programs throughout the entire United States and especially here in the state of Michigan.

The NAGA (National Association of Greenkeepers of America) is the original name of the Association which was founded in 1926 at the Sylvania Country Club, Sylvania, Ohio. Its early members came from the golfing center of America - Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York and Canada.

The NAGA was founded and formed to promote the art and science of Greenkeeping.

Many Charter members came from Michigan. Herb Shave (the first President of the Michigan and Border Cities Golf Course Superintendents Association - 1924), Vern Sincerbeau, Willie Smith, John Gray (the ninth President of the National Association, from Windsor, Ontario, Canada), Leroy Dustin of Benton Harbor and Ford Goodrich to name just a few that I recall. They recognized a need for turf research so they prevailed on the staff at MSU to do work on the development of new turfgrasses (Bluegrasses and Bentgrasses primarily). Turf diseases were of primary concern also and they desperately needed answers to help them in this new science.

The leadership in turfgrass development by the golfing community also included the United States Golf Association who started turf research on their own well before the founding of the golf course Superintendent associations. We can credit the majority of the turfgrass research in America to the game of Golf. The USGA and the GCSAA have been striving for years to achieve the impossible dream - a perfect turf. You will hear more about the role of the USGA from your next speaker, Al Radko.

The leadership by the Golf Course Superintendents has continued through the years. Four National Presidents have come from the state of Michigan. John Gray, Ward Cornwell, Norm Kramer and myself. Andy Bertoni and Bruce Matthews also served on the Executive Committee for several years.

In 1956, the Scholarship and Research Foundation was established to help promote the Research Programs that were so necessary and meaningful to the success of our profession as well as the scholarship program for deserving students enrolled in turf grass curriculums.

There are now 12,000 golf courses in America, over 600 of these are in Michigan. Because of the support from our S&R programs there has been a tremendous technological boom which allowed this growth in recent years. Much of the advancement in the remainder of the turfgrass industry can be attributed to projects supported by the GCSAA.

Money for the S&R Foundation comes from many sources:

1. Manufacturers and commercial suppliers
2. The National Golf Day Fund
3. Golf Associations (GAM and GAM Seniors)
4. International Turfgrass Conference and Show
5. Individuals
6. Chapters of the GCSAA
7. Advertising in our magazine (Golf Course Management)

Since the Foundation was founded, \$433,130.00 has been disbursed - \$280,550.00 for 604 scholarships and \$152,580.00 for 134 research grants. Michigan State University has always shared in these grants and scholarships as you witnessed yesterday.

After the disasterous ICE SHEET damage incurred during the winter of 1962, the GCSAA presented a Climate Control Chamber (growth chamber) to MSU and Dr. Jim Beard to study winter damage to turf. You are all familiar with the fine results of that work. Other grants were given for soil science projects, plant nutrition, turf diseases and plant selection and other cultural practices for proper turfgrass management.

The entire industry benefits from these projects. The GCSAA is proud of its affiliation with the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation and MSU.

Other areas of support include such things as the Educational Advisory Council which is made up of educators from the leading turf schools in America. MSU has been well represented on the Council. This is where programs are developed for Turf Schools and Conferences. They give us input from the academic field.

The Certification of Superintendents was instituted in 1972. Superintendents in Michigan are strong supporters of this program. Seminars in Pesticide Usage, Landscaping, Business management, Personnel management were all well attended by our members. Educational manuals have been written for the Superintendent that wants to improve his skills in turfgrass management.

The GCSAA has been a leader in writing Position Papers on the Fertilizer Crisis of 1974, Remember when a House Bill was proposed to ban the use of fertilizer on ornamental turf? They came to our aid. Other papers involved Water Impact Studies and the use of Restricted Chemicals.

The only museum of old and antique turf equipment is housed right here at MSU. A restoration program operated by the turf students is supported by funds from the GCSAA.

When OSHA and EPA became threats to our profession we developed a guide on OSHA regulations.

As you can see, the GCSAA has been supporting Turfgrass development in Michigan for a long time. We intend to remain a major force in the future. We are proud of our efforts and we are proud of the work done here at MSU.

Remember, to achieve all that is possible, we must attempt the impossible. To be as much as we can be, we must dream of being more.