

We'll miss you, Mike

By Curt Harler/Managing Editor

Dr. Michael Villani, Cornell entomologist and one of the original board members of TurfGrass Trends, died May 15 of cancer. Mike, who remained a vital force on this newsletter, will be remembered as an international leader in the area of soil insect ecology, with emphasis on turfgrass pests, and an all-around good guy.



Villani

He was the author of many scientific publications and books, and was the recipient of numerous state and national awards for his work, including the Distinguished Service Award from the Turfgrass Council of North Carolina in 2001.

"He had focused on key soil insect pests including white grubs and mole crickets, which was of benefit to those of us in the south," says Dr. Rick Brandenburg, North Carolina State University.

Maria Haber, past publisher of *TGT*, recalls Mike as "a wonderful person to work with." She credited him for helping shape *TGT* into the publication it is today.

"When he was on his summer break doing

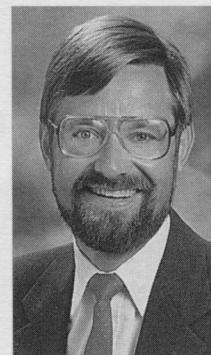
research in the jungles of Honduras or collecting bugs in North Carolina, he knew I would need help. He always left me with a list of colleagues to help me out of any bind that I might get into during his absence," Haber recalls.

Another example of his dedication took place after a full-day session at a past GCSAA Conference in Orlando. "Although it was his birthday, he spent it teaching Integrated Pest Management!" Maria says. "He surely deserved the best dinner room service could provide and some private time to respond to his family's birthday wishes." Instead, Mike took a break, spoke to his family and helped Maria structure the next series of articles on IPM for *TGT*.

He received the Citation of Merit in 1999 (the highest award presented by the New York State Turfgrass Association) and the 1997 Urban Entomology Award presented by the Entomological Society of America.

Perhaps more important, the night before he died, Mike went out to the ballpark with his daughter to see one final game.

"He represented the best in what a scientist can be – not only through his work, but also through his kind and caring personality which made him a leader. He will be missed professionally and personally," Brandenburg says.



Curt Harler
Managing Editor

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