



Mrs. Shirling and Eugene Roberts, Fairway Turf Farms



Mr. and Mrs. John Hall, University of Maryland professor



Ray Gustin, Gustin Gardens

Mr. Sod Retires

He taught them what quality sod was. He always had plenty of time to go around for anybody who needed help. He was the father of the sod certification law. He sodded the infamous Watergate complex in Washington. He was the first man in the country to produce certified sod. No matter what he was asked, his motto always was: "I'll be glad to."

Call him "Mr. Sod," "Mr. Grass," or "Mr. Turf."

Parker Shirling.

He came from Missouri to Maryland to start Princeton Turf Farms in 1964 and the first pallet of sod came off the ground in 1965. And they were all there recently to honor him. Over 200 people he had worked with came from all over to the Hilton in Annapolis, Md., to honor him as he announced his retirement at 67.

Eugene Roberts of nearby Fairway Turf Farms gave the toast: "He said we had to have quality sod and

sod guidelines to protect the consumer — and it has upgraded the sod producer as well."

Dr. Elwyn E. Deal, assistant director of the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service: "There has never been a person more unselfish than Parker; he was always ready to jump in his station wagon and go to a meeting or wherever else he was needed."

Dr. William Mitchell, turf specialist at the University of Delaware: "When we heard Parker was retiring, we took a vote and decided to close the whole place down. Even the grass around Agriculture Hall turned a little bit brown."

Ray Gustin, Gustin Gardens, representing the Associated Landscaping Contractors of America: "Whenever somebody asked him to do something, he always said 'I'll be glad to.'"

Jim Fisher, representing the

Maryland Turfgrass Association: "We've had about 120 meetings since he helped form the association and he has been to about 110 of them. He pioneered quality turf in Maryland and the country."

Jack Kidwell, Kidwell Turf Farms, Culpeper, Va., representing the American Sod Producers Association: "He is the first sod producer to earn honorary membership in ASPA."

Emory Pattin of the Maryland Turfgrass Council: "He made the turf industry sit up and take notice of the changing times; he made the industry better for all of us."

Angelo Cammarota, representing the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents: "The greatest tribute to any man is to be accepted by his peers, and that is what is going on here tonight." □