



The turfgrass industry mourns

Business is up. Profits are holding steady. 1990 has been a good year for the turf and landscape industry.

Or has it?

News comes this morning, as we prepare to send this issue to the printer, that Dr. Fred Grau passed away last night (see "Green Industry News"). Barely a month ago, Harry Gill was taken from us.

The word "great" is not one to be taken lightly. But when describing the contributions Fred and Harry made to this industry, no word other than "great" can be used. For they imparted not just knowledge, but they gave of themselves, each in his own unique way, each for many, many years.

Neither could sit back and watch life pass before him. In their later years, both disliked not being able to get their fingernails dirty every day, Harry at Milwaukee County Stadium, Fred at whatever turf research plots were handy. Harry kept active even after a multiple heart bypass. Fred, once threatened by leg amputation, witnessed numerous turf shows from his wheelchair.

Harry was the consummate team player, forever offering his assistance to any athletic field manager who might ask. He spent countless hours speaking to others on the phone, giving informative—usually hilarious—speeches at seminars, sitting at the bar swilling over the seemingly endless tales that enthralled whoever might be listening. (And he always drew a big crowd.)

Fred was a far quieter countenance, cerebral, at one with nature. The man dedicated his whole life to the advancement of turfgrass science, and he enjoyed it. My, how he enjoyed it!

"The big window at my desk gives me a clear view of my trouble-free lawn and the healthy plantings," he once wrote. "The brilliance of the grass is remarkable. Last night, a white frost covered all. Today, it's 45 degrees, the frost is gone, but the grass color is still striking. I get inspiration from this view."

Harry claimed his degree was from the College of Hard Knocks; Fred earned a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland. So while Harry was a popular speaker, Fred was a prolific writer, sharing with this office many of what he called his "Musings." Yet much of their material could not be published in this magazine, Harry's because it was too ribald, Fred's because it was too philosophical.

Fred once wrote—after this magazine had made a modest donation to his "baby," the National Sports Turf Council—that he was proud to be our friend.

He had it all wrong. It was the turfgrass industry that was proud to have such friends and benefactors as the kindly Fred Grau and the fascinating Harry Gill.

The industry mourns their passing.

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