

# PGMS knows its mission

*Professional Grounds Management Society seeks to unite and serve Green Industry professionals and others through education and environmental awareness.*

by JOHN GILLAN, PGMS

**A**lthough the Professional Grounds Management Society is now in its 86th year, what has happened since 1962—the year of the Society's 50 anniversary—has been the most progressive period in its history.

PGMS began as the National Association of Gardeners in suburban New York and New Jersey in 1905. Those original members were then known as "estate gardeners".

In 1911, it was realized that it just made sense to include all institutional grounds managers in the mix. Since then, the broadening of the Society has continued—although under two influences:

- ▶ the unique core of the Society would be the institutional grounds professional generalist, and
- ▶ the organization would remain a professional society for the individual.

#### Reasons to join

Since 1962, what has happened is that more turf specialists, horticulturists, irrigation specialists, independent contractors and even some arborists have seen fit to join the ranks, especially if their daily work involves them in work for institutions.

The types of institutions include colleges and universities, municipalities, park and recreation facilities, office parks, apartment complexes, hotels/motels, cemeteries, theme parks and other areas needing professional landscape care. The colleges and universities are the largest single membership category.

Some of the changes within the PGMS since 1962 include:

- ▶ changing the Society's fiscal year.
- ▶ changing the working relationship with the

Society's local branches to bring the groups into greater commonality.

- ▶ adding a significant marketing capability to Society headquarters.
- ▶ originating the Certified Grounds Manager peer review program (1980), the first such program of its type in the service portion of the Green Industry.
- ▶ offering the Certified Groundskeeper program in 1996.

The greatest changes, however, have been those relating to things outside the organization:

- ▶ one of the earliest scholarship programs in the industry.
- ▶ more active participation in allied industry events and associations, and partnering with ALCA



PGMS President Tom Smith, center, cuts the ribbon at a GIE show with PLCAA's Executive vice president Ann McClure and ALCA member Ron Kujawa.

and PLCAA in the Green Industry Expo.

PGMS will continue to help the individual manager develop techniques and management skills to assure an outstanding grounds management program for his/her organization, agency, department, firm or employers, and upgrade the level of professionalism.

—John Gillan is executive director of The Professional Grounds Management Society, based in Hunt Valley, Md.

CERTIFICATION

**PGMS**  
A voluntary, peer review  
program for  
grounds professionals