



# Norman Goldenberg,

*retired senior vice president of government affairs and industry relations for TruGreen*



**Who's your mentor?** A guy by the name of Charlie Hromada. He was a senior vice president at Terminix. He passed away about 6 years ago. When he retired, I took over his responsibilities in 1997. He was an entomologist and I learned from him a great deal.

**What interested you in pests in the first place?** I thought I was going to be a dentist. I knew I was going to have to go to school for eight years and Florida didn't have dental school, so I would have had to go out of state. It would have cost a lot to go out of state, and I didn't want to go to school for that long, so I lost interest. I talked to Chuck Steinmetz, who I'd known since eighth or ninth grade. He was a fraternity brother (at the University of Florida). Before I knew it I was working for pest and lawn care companies. The first company I worked for was Truly Nolan in Miami over a summer break between sophomore and junior years.

**What would you say has changed the most in your 50-plus-year career?** The advent of technology in the routine business of pest management and lawn care. It's allowed for people to become more productive. Consequently, it leads to greater earnings and greater longevity. It's a win-win for the specialists out there doing the work, the company and the customer who can schedule services online. It's just a whole different business today.

**What's next, would you say?** I can expect in the next decade or two there will be devices on properties that will alert us when services are needed. Perhaps there will be a device that recognizes lack of magnesium on a palm tree, for example, similar to what's available on the irrigation side.



**What do you see as your greatest accomplishment over your career?** The involvement I've had in trade associations: National Pest Management Association (NPMA) and PLCAA, which evolved into the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). I was involved in the (ALCA/PLCAA) merger and have been on the PLANET board ever since. I'm finally coming off the board this month. I've always believed in being able to accomplish more through an association than you can by yourself. I've always been an advocate of even the smallest businesses getting involved.

I also love the way I've seen my friends and colleagues grow their businesses in this industry. It's very rewarding. One thing I've always said in my travels, and which I've done routinely, is I can go almost anywhere in the country and call up a pest or lawn care professional and have lunch with someone. It's a great feeling.

*(Editor's note: Goldenberg was given PLANET's Lifetime Leadership Award in late February at Great Escape, pictured above.)*

## OFF THE CLOCK

### YOU RETIRED THIS YEAR FROM SERVICEMASTER. WHAT'S NEXT?

I'm consulting for TruGreen, Terminix and for others. I plan to stay active in both the (pest and lawn care) industries. I'm still subscribing to news services and regulatory sites with industry keywords. I'll alert the people in the states and other industry people and just stay active.

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.** I'm married and I have four kids, who are all married. The youngest will be 35 and oldest will be 48. I have six grandkids.

### WHERE'S YOUR FAVORITE VACATION SPOT?

We like going to Europe. We've been over to Greece, on a river cruise on the Danube and spent some time in Istanbul. I have tons of miles on Delta that are just waiting to be used, so you never know. I also like to ski. We usually ski with the grandkids at spring break.

### CAN YOU RECOMMEND ANY GOOD READS?

I love to read novels. I read so many legislative things and technical stuff, so I like no-brainers. When I fly I take my iPad to read things like James Patterson thrillers, books by David Baldacci and Michael Donnelly.

