In Memoriam

September 24, 1935 - May 14, 2018

The turfgrass industry lost one of its leading icons on May 14, 2018. Dr. James B Beard was a tireless worker dedicated to the advancement of turfgrass science, whether focused on research, academics, or mentorship. As a highly respected professor and continuing education specialist at Virginia Tech from 1965 until his retirement in 2002, Dr. Beard committed his life’s work to the turfgrass industry.

Dr. Beard started as a graduate student at Virginia Tech in 1959 and quickly rose through the ranks to become the Director of the Virginia Tech Agronomy Program and a Research Professor. His contributions to the turfgrass industry have been immeasurable. His collaborative work with the USGA Green Section staff resulted in two editions of the highly respected Green Section Record. His contributions to the field of turfgrass science were recognized when he was the 1989 recipient of the USGA Green Section Award.

At the heart of Dr. Beard’s work was a passion for research. His research focused on turfgrass physiology, organization, and management tools. He also had an impressive knack for reaching the public, publishing over 300 papers and more than 200 popular articles. Dr. Beard’s work resulted in two editions of the highly respected Green Section Record. His collaborative work with the USGA Green Section staff.

Dr. Beard served as the USGA’s Research Director for more than 20 years, overseeing the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program. While at the USGA, he played an important role in developing the Course Consulting Service for advice. With help from researchers and educators, the USGA’s Course Consulting Service provides answers to questions submitted by superintendents and golfers from around the world.

In the golf arena, Dr. Beard played an important role in developing the Green Section Record. The Green Section Record, a publication for golf superintendents, is available through the USGA Green Section Online Library. The May 18, 2018, issue of the Green Section Record was the last issue that featured Dr. Beard’s work. The May 18, 2018, issue of the Green Section Record.

Dr. Beard’s work was not limited to research. He was a mentor to many and valued his relationships with the turfgrass community. He was an active participant in the USGA Green Section and provided guidance to superintendents and golfers on a wide range of topics. His contributions to the turfgrass industry will be remembered for years to come.

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