

1979 GREEN SECTION EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Arthur A. Snyder, 19th Recipient of USGA Green Section Award

ARTHUR A. SNYDER, of Phoenix, Arizona, a pioneer in the American turfgrass industry, became the 19th recipient of the annual USGA Green Section Award for distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass. The Award was presented to Mr. Snyder by Frank D. Tatum, Jr., of San Francisco, California, President of the USGA, and William C. Campbell, of Huntington, West Virginia, Chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee. The ceremony took place during the 23rd Annual Green Section Conference on Golf Course Management, which was held in New York City on January 26.

In accepting the Award, Mr. Snyder stated:

"I am extremely happy to receive this Award, and I thank the USGA Green Section and everyone who had a voice in my selection. But I must readily admit that I have never done anything outstanding enough to merit this Award. My only claim might be that I have spent a lifetime in doing my very best to help the golfer enjoy golf to the utmost while playing at the course at which I was serving as superintendent.

"You are all aware of the work now being done by the Green Section — financial assistance for turf research, the advisory service by its staff of agronomists, the publication of the *Green Section Record*. But the Green Section's history goes back a long, long way. Its work has covered many facets.

"It was shortly after the close of World War I that, in an effort to improve the quality of turf on golf courses, the USGA gave birth to the Green Section, which, in turn, gave birth to the world's first, and for a number of years, the world's only fine turf research station, the Arlington Turf Garden.

"Beginning in January, 1921, the results of the work being done at this station were published in what was called *The Bulletin of the United States Golf Association Green Section*. It was mailed each month for the next 13 years to the greenkeeper at USGA Member Clubs. The Depression forced the discontinuance of the *Bulletin* at the end of 1933. During those 13 years, it became the greenkeeper's bible, and we eagerly awaited its arrival each month. It contained reports on the results of their research, articles on every phase of golf course maintenance, and a question and answer section of great value.

"I well remember planting stolons of a creeping bentgrass while I was an employee of the Westmoreland Country Club, near Pittsburgh, in 1921 or 1922. These stolons were furnished by the Arlington Experiment Station to any USGA Member Club that desired to try out this new method of planting putting greens.

"But to get back to the *Bulletin*, it was by seriously studying the material published in it

that I and hundreds of others gained our education in greenkeeping — turf management, as it is called today.

"Finally, I want to thank the USGA Green Section for recognizing the value of capable golf course superintendents to the game. They have shown this by honoring a number of golf course superintendents in the past.

"Very few other golfing organizations have done so! There are exceptions, of course. One such group is the Arizona Golf Association, which, in 1975, went so far as to induct a golf course superintendent into its Hall of Fame!

"In closing, let me say that the Green Section has always been very helpful to me, and I am very grateful."

Snyder was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1898. He began his career as a caddie in 1909, and later became a golf professional. In 1927, after several years of apprenticeship, he became the golf course superintendent at the Longue Vue Club, in Verona, Pennsylvania. Later, he moved to the Alcona Country Club, near Pittsburgh.

During these years he helped to develop the turfgrass research program at Pennsylvania State University. Through his capacities in various Pennsylvania turfgrass organizations, he significantly contributed to the research programs of Professor H. B. Musser, Dr. Fred V. Grau, and Dr. John Monteith. He served on the Board of Directors of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. He has spoken at many GCSAA Conferences and Green Section meetings.

In 1953, Snyder moved to Phoenix, where he began a commercial sod nursery from which he developed one of the earliest selections of an improved fine-leaved bermudagrass. It was designated A-53 and became known as "Snyder's Bermuda." Today, several southwestern golf courses still use A-53.

He was instrumental in founding the Arizona Cactus and Pine Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Arizona Turfgrass Council. Through these organizations and his efforts, the University of Arizona renewed its interest in turfgrass education and research. He trained several men who are now golf course superintendents in the Southwest. Several members of his family are engaged in golf. Two sons and a grandson are golf course superintendents, a third son is a golf course architect, and another grandson is a technical representative for an organization engaged in the turfgrass industry.

When Snyder retired in 1974, Paradise Valley Country Club, in Scottsdale, Arizona, where he had served as superintendent since 1956, made him an honorary member. Many other clubs have held "Art Snyder Day" in appreciation of his contribution to their golf courses.