

## 1983 GREEN SECTION EDUCATION CONFERENCE

# Alexander M. Radko, USGA Green Section 1983 Award Recipient

“I AM BOTH proud and humble to receive the Green Section Award.” These were the words of Alexander M. Radko, former National Director of the USGA Green Section, the recipient of the 1983 USGA Green Section Award. This honor is given annually by the USGA for distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass. Radko was the 23rd recipient.

Radko received the award during the 27th annual USGA Green Section Educational Conference, at the Georgia World Congress Center, in Atlanta, Georgia, in late February. The presentation was made by William C. Campbell, President of the USGA; George M. Bard, of Rolling Meadows, Illinois, Chairman of the Green Section Award Committee; and Harry W. Easterly, Jr., Senior Executive Director of the USGA. The Green Section Conference was held in conjunction with and at the invitation of the Golf Course Superintendents Association's International Turfgrass Conference and Show. The morning program attracted over 700 golf course superintendents and club officials from throughout the world.

“A leader of national prominence, a dedicated educator, a professional with great personal character,” are a few of the words used to describe Al Radko during the ceremonies. His 35-year career with the Green Section was marked by many outstanding contributions to the study of turfgrass management.

He joined the Green Section Staff in 1947 while he was completing studies leading to a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Maryland. Hired by Dr. Fred V. Grau, then the Green Section Director, Al Radko rose from Research Assistant, Agronomist, Eastern Regional Director, and finally National Director of the USGA Green Section. He served as the National Research Director,



(Left to right) Harry W. Easterly, Jr., USGA Executive Director; Alexander M. Radko, Green Section Award Recipient; George M. Bard, Green Section Award Committee Chairman; William C. Campbell, USGA President, at Green Section Award presentation.

administering the Green Section Research and Education Fund, the largest private turfgrass research fund in the United States. He was editor of the *Green Section Record* for five years and was a contributor as well as a primary editor of the USGA's latest book, *Turf Management for Golf Courses*, by Dr. James B. Beard.

In the early 1950s, Radko was given responsibility of building and then caring for a putting green on the White House lawn, a gift from the USGA to President Eisenhower, an avid golfer. Radko also served golf in Japan following World War II. He was in charge of the rebuilding and rehabilitation of several golf courses there to be used by U.S. occupational forces. One of his pupils, Pete

Nakamura, was later to become one of Japan's greatest golfers.

Born in Yonkers, New York, Radko was introduced to the game by his brother, who asked him to caddie for him at the Sunningdale Country Club, near Yonkers.

“From the cobblestone streets of Yonkers to the beautiful green grass of Sunningdale was too much of a contrast to resist,” Radko recalled.

Radko's career has been truly one of steady, far-reaching leadership. He has been an immensely valuable and generous servant in the world of golf. His name — as the 1983 recipient of the Green Section Award — will bring even greater honor to those who receive it in future years.