

1973 Green Section Education Conference: "Practical Turfgrass Management"

Marvin H. Ferguson - 13th Recipient of USGA Green Section Award

Marvin H. Ferguson of Bryan, Texas, became the 1973 recipient of the Green Section Award for distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass. Dr. Ferguson's contributions in the field have been varied and important over three decades.

As a young man his work at the USGA Green Section in Arlington, Va., helped to establish the usefulness of arsenical materials for herbicidal purposes and resulted in the recognition of thiram as an effective turf fungicide. Later he was responsible for deciding which of hundreds of grass selections should be saved and moved from the USGA's Arlington Turf Gardens to the United States Department of Agriculture Plant Industry Station in Beltsville, Md.; one of the five bluegrass strains saved was later released as Merion bluegrass. U-3 bermudagrass was the only bermudagrass moved to Beltsville.

Dr. Ferguson's work at Texas A & M University, where he was a professor of agronomy for 15 years, was vital in the evolution of the USGA Green Section Specifications for Putting Green Construction, which rely heavily on his contention that matters of permeability and pore space distribution, together with the employment of textural layers to take advantage of soil-water movement phenomena, are vital criteria for evaluating putting green soils.

Dr. Ferguson has served the USGA Green Section at three times during his career, first during 1940-42 at the Arlington Station, then from 1947 through 1951 as a research agronomist, and finally from 1953 through 1968 as Director of its Mid-Continent Region and National Research Coordinator. Following are excerpts from the acceptance remarks by Dr. Ferguson.

"I accept the Green Section Award with mixed feelings—with a sense of pride and a sense of humility.

"I am proud of the Award first because of the name it bears. The United States Golf Association Green Section has been a major factor in my life's work. My experiences with the Green Section could fill an afternoon, but I shall not inflict them upon you.

"I am proud of the Green Section Award because of the men who have received it before me. I have had the rare good fortune to know all of them. I have been inspired by them and I have tried to emulate them in many ways, and yet I have fallen short in all ways.

"These considerations make me proud to join the list of Green Section Award recipients but humble because of the stature of the men on that list.

"I am humble for another reason. This Award is inscribed 'for distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass.' Yet as I recall my days of visiting golf courses and talking with superintendents and club officials, I always gained more information than I gave.

"There is another reason for which I am proud of this honor. I know a great many people have a voice in choosing the recipient of the Green Section Award but I also know that the Green Section staff plays a significant role in the selection process. The knowledge that they must have approved of my being chosen for this honor is very gratifying and I appreciate their confidence.

"During my career, I have felt that I have been blessed more than most men. I have had a varied career and a satisfying one. I am now engaged in golf course architecture and consulting work. My son, my daughter, and my wife work with me. My wife Floy is with me today. This Award is as much for her as for me.

"And so, with a close-knit loyal family, warm friendships and work that I enjoy, what more could one ask?

"The only words I can think of that adequately express my feelings are truly, 'My cup runneth over.' Thank you very much."