

Dr. Victor B. Youngner USGA Green Section 1985 Award Recipient

THE LATE Dr. Victor B. Youngner, who developed Santa Ana bermudagrass and El Toro zoysiagrass during his 29-year career in research and teaching at the University of California, Riverside, was selected for the 1985 USGA Green Section Award.

The Award was presented to Dr. Youngner's widow, Violet, on February 12, at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America annual banquet before 1,700 guests, at the Sheraton Washington Hotel, Washington, D.C. George M. Bard, of Naples, Florida, Chairman of the Green Section Award Committee and a member of the USGA Executive Committee, presented the award. The ceremonies followed the Green Section's Educational Conference earlier in the day, which attracted over 700 superintendents and club officials, some from as far away as Australia and Singapore.

Dr. Youngner excelled in turfgrass breeding, and in many areas of plant growth and development studies. He worked extensively with salt-tolerant and alkali grasses, and he was a pioneer in investigating *Poa annua* variations and selections. He was an authority on kikuyugrass (*Pennisetum clandestinum*), and he believed this sub-tropical, rank growing grass species might someday develop, through breeding, into a valuable turfgrass. Although he involved himself in studies of the effect of air pollution on grasses, weed control, fertilization and mowing practices, his 1983 research with co-worker Dr. V. Gibeault on the USGA Golf Shoe Study II attracted wide attention and interest.

At the close of his career, Dr. Youngner was most active in a zoysiagrass breeding project and had recently developed several new and very promising varieties. El Toro is one of his creations, and it currently is being patented for release. He was also active in the breeding and commercial development of Guayule, a woody desert shrub of the Southwest and Mexico that has promising properties in rubber production. His relentless work produced 69 technical and 146 semi-technical publications. He co-



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edited a 1972 book, *Biology and Utilization of Grasses*, with Dr. C. M. McKell.

AMONG HIS many endeavors, Dr. Youngner served as editor of the *California Turfgrass Culture Quarterly*, from 1955 until his death, on April 18, 1984. He wrote frequently for trade publications, including *Golf Course Management* and the *USGA Green Section Record*. He was an advisor to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, as well as to the Southern California Turfgrass Council. He appeared

frequently as a speaker at local, state, and national turfgrass conferences. He was a member of the USGA Green Section Committee for 27 years.

Born in Nelson, Minnesota, Victor Bernarr Youngner had his college education interrupted in 1942 by World War II. After serving three years in the Army Air Forces, he earned his Bachelor of Science and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Minnesota and for a number of years worked in plant breeding for commercial seed companies. He joined the faculty of the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1955.

He was a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and a member of Sigma Xi and the Gamma Sigma Delta Agricultural Honor Society. He is listed in *Who's Who in the West and American Men and Women in Science*.

When she was notified of the Award Committee selection, Mrs. Youngner responded, "This is really a great honor for Vic to be so recognized. And I will go anywhere to accept the Award on his behalf."

In presenting the Green Section Award, the USGA wishes to identify, celebrate, and hold up for emulation individuals, such as Dr. Victor B. Youngner, who exemplify outstanding dedication to golf through their work with turfgrass.

George M. Bard

