

Ralph E. Engel — 1993 USGA Green Section Award Recipient

DR. RALPH E. ENGEL, whose career spanned more than 40 years of service as teacher, researcher, and extension specialist, is the 1993 recipient of the Green Section Award of the United States Golf Association. Raymond B. Anderson, Chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee, presented the award to Dr. Engel on January 30, 1993, in Anaheim, California. The presentation was made at the annual banquet of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America annual conference and show. The award serves to honor those persons deserving special recognition for distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass.

"It is wonderful to be recognized for a lifetime of work in one's profession," noted Dr. Engel in accepting the award. "I can't tell you how much it means to me."

Dr. Engel has a very long and distinguished involvement with turfgrass. His career at Rutgers University, in New Jersey, spanned 39 years of service as a teacher, researcher, and extension specialist. His research work contributed many of the basic principles on which turfgrass management practices are based today. His early work with nitrogen fertilization of bentgrass concluded that applying smaller nitrogen amounts more frequently is the best way to manage bentgrass. He was instrumental in the development of misting as an aid in turfgrass survival during high-temperature stress periods. Mist systems have become a popular tool in greens maintenance programs. Dr. Engel's root studies provided evidence that many preemergence herbicides are root inhibitors. He also demonstrated that differences between bentgrass and annual bluegrass temperature requirements for seed germination could be used as the basis for the timing of turfgrass renovation programs.

His research work was not confined to cultural practice investigations. Dr. Engel was instrumental in collecting the first turf-type perennial ryegrasses. Some of his selections were used in Dr. Reed Funk's polycross release, Manhattan ryegrass. His discovery of a superior-looking Kentucky bluegrass resulted in the release of the variety "Mystic."



Dr. Engel did some of the early research work involving the USGA's Stimpmeter.

Dr. Engel's teaching role may have been nearly as important as his research work. Many of his former students play influential roles in the turfgrass industry today, and more than 125 golf course superintendents in the New Jersey/New York metropolitan area received their basic turfgrass science training from him. His role as administrative advisor and instructor in the Rutgers Winter Turf Program over the years also has touched countless students. Nine of Dr. Engel's graduate students currently are involved in university turfgrass teaching programs, training yet another generation of our leaders for tomorrow.

As a direct service to golf course superintendents and golf turf, Dr. Engel has authored and co-authored hundreds of scientific and popular articles over the years. He has been a lecturer at the GCSAA National Conference and regional seminars, as well as many state turfgrass conferences and local association meetings. During his first years in New Jersey, Dr. Engel conducted a turfgrass visitation service for the Metropolitan

Golf Association and the New Jersey Golf Association, a forerunner of the current USGA Green Section Turf Advisory Service. His approach always centered around helping the superintendent think through his problems with the available knowledge to search for the most logical solution. This cooperation and willingness to serve continued with a nine-year tenure as a member of the USGA Green Section Committee.

Through his 40-plus years of work, Dr. Engel has received many befitting honors, including the GCSAA Distinguished Service Award, election into the New Jersey Turfgrass Hall of Fame, Professor Emeritus from Rutgers University, and the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award by the Metropolitan Golf Course Superintendents.

Dr. Engel could not have imagined what a far-reaching influence he was going to exert on his students, colleagues, and the turfgrass industry when he received his Ph.D. degree in 1951, and the USGA is proud to list him among the distinguished recipients of its Green Section Award.