

Kenyon T. Payne — 1994 Green Section Award Recipient

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Dr. Payne added his expertise to fellow leaders in the turfgrass industry. From left to right: Ian Forbes, USGA; B. P. Robinson, Georgia; Jack Harper and Prof. H. B. Musser, Penn State; A. M. Radko and Dr. Fred V. Grau, USGA Green Section; J. M. Boyce, Ottawa, Canada; H. L. Lantz, Iowa; James Tyson, Michigan; Dr. J. A. DeFrance, Rhode Island; Ed Merkel, Penn State; K. T. Payne, Purdue.

Dr. Kenyon (Ken) T. Payne received the USGA's 1994 Green Section Award at this year's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference in Dallas, Texas. This annual award honors persons for distinguished contributions to golf through work with turfgrass. Thomas W. Chisholm, Chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee, presented the Green Section Award on February 7, 1994.

The award was accepted on Dr. Payne's behalf by Gerry Faubel, Past President of the GCSAA and longtime friend of Dr. Payne. Upon hearing about his selection as the 1994 recipient, Dr. Payne responded, "This is the most prestigious award I have ever received. I am very grateful."

Fondly referred to as "Doc" by many of his students, Dr. Payne's contributions to the turfgrass industry continue through the 800-plus students he diligently guided and trained throughout his career. As chairman of the Department of Crop Science at Michigan State University, Dr. Payne recognized the need to have a strong turfgrass research program. He served as a strong moving force

in initiating the two-year Golf Turf Program at MSU, and after the initial coordinator left the University in 1968, Dr. Payne took over the duties of coordinating the program.

Under Dr. Payne's direction, the program grew in numbers and stature to the point where it is now recognized as one of the strongest in the country. One of the unique strengths of the program under his leadership was the emphasis Dr. Payne placed on encouraging his students to remember the importance of personal values, relationships with people, and contributions to the community. Many of the nomination letters for the Green Section Award included supporting comments from golf course superintendents who emphasized their gratitude for the education Dr. Payne shared, not only in turfgrass, but in life as well. Dr. Payne and his wife, Jane, played host to many student get-togethers that served as morale builders that carried into the classroom. One former student noted, "There are those who love their job, but there are few who love those they are serving."

During his tenure at Michigan State, Dr. Payne worked in turfgrass breeding, in cooperation with Dr. Joe Vargas, to develop leaf-spot-resistant fine fescue cultivars. He was instrumental in the organization of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation and the MSU Turf Club. Working closely with undergraduate students, he also was actively involved in restoring antique golf course maintenance equipment. He hunted high and low for ancient replacement parts, nearly having to beg for the funds to cover restoration expenses. He proudly gave enthusiastic tours of the gleaming relics to interested campus visitors.

In 1948, Dr. Payne received his Ph.D. in agronomy and plant genetics from the University of Minnesota. He became Assistant Professor at Purdue University with responsibilities in teaching and breeding of turfgrasses (creeping bentgrass and zoysiagrass) and forage crops. He joined Michigan State University as Professor in 1952 and was named Department Head of Farm Crops in 1959. He left Michigan in 1964 to serve as Dean of Agriculture at the University of Nigeria in Ksukka, West Africa, and rejoined MSU two years later as Chairman of Farm Crops.

During his career, Dr. Payne was named a Fellow in the American Society of Agronomy and Crop Science Society of America. He was the recipient of the Meritorious Service Awards from both the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation and the GCSAA. He also was a member of The Golf Collector's Society and the International Turfgrass Society.

After retiring in 1988, he formed Executive Golf Search, an industry placement service for golf course superintendents. He continued consulting with golf courses, and counseling and guiding the careers of many of his students.

One of Dr. Payne's favorite sayings is, "No telling how far a person can go in the world if he doesn't care who gets the credit." Dr. Payne's behind-the-scenes efforts have made this philosophy work for *his* life.