

News Notes

IKE GRAINGER AWARD PRESENTED TO DR. JAMES R. WATSON AND DR. PAUL E. RIEKE

The USGA is pleased to honor Dr. James R. Watson and Dr. Paul E. Rieke with the USGA's Ike Grainger Award for 25 years of dedicated service as USGA committee volunteers.

The award was named in honor of a remarkable gentleman named Isaac B. Grainger, who served as USGA president and as a Rules authority for many decades until his death on October 18, 1999, just short of his 105th birthday! So legendary was Grainger's knowledge of the Rules of Golf and his lifetime devotion to the game, that in 1995 the USGA established the Ike Grainger Award to recognize persons who have volunteered on behalf of the USGA for 25 years.

The USGA volunteers we honor are well known to practically everyone who is involved in turfgrass management, and golf turf management in particular. Dr. Watson and Dr. Rieke (a.k.a. Dr. Jim and Dr. Paul) are icons in the industry, and their contributions to the USGA and to golf have involved participation in the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Committee for 25 years. Interestingly, they have many characteristics in common.

- Each was raised on a farm and took a circuitous path to the turfgrass industry — Dr. Jim was born in 1920 in Leesville, Louisiana, and Dr. Paul was born in 1934 in Kankakee, Illinois.
- Both are soft spoken, but both are strong leaders and have contributed profoundly to the great successes of the USGA's Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program.
- Both have received the USGA Green Section Award for "contributions to the game of golf through work with turfgrass." This annual award was established in 1961, and the list of recipients is a who's who of turfgrass in academia, industry, and superintendence.
- Both have received the Green Section's Piper and Oakley Award, established in 1998 to recognize volunteers who have contributed exceptional service for the benefit of the programs and activities of the USGA Green Section. Drs. Piper and Oakley were men of great character, keen

vision, and remarkable achievement, characteristics that pertain equally well to Dr. Jim and Dr. Paul.

- The presentation of the Ike Grainger Awards to Dr. Jim Watson and Dr. Paul Rieke completes the final leg of their "Triple Crown" as it pertains to recognition from the USGA. No one else has ever achieved all three honors.

Now, you might wonder how important the Ike Grainger Award is, given that "all you have to do" is show up for 25 years! Well, you can be assured that Dr. Watson and Dr. Rieke have spent countless hours, days, weeks, months, and years on behalf of the USGA, and they were instrumental in helping direct the largest turfgrass and environmental research program ever undertaken. Since 1983, this USGA program has supported more than 400 research projects at 39 universities, at a cost of more than \$34 million in actual grants.

On top of that, each year several USGA staff, along with committee volunteers, took turns visiting the 35+ universities and the principal investigators at every one. This involved a lot of travel and dedication on the part of our volunteers, and I'll bet you can guess who were the two most consistent volunteers — yes, Dr. Jim and Dr. Paul. Their knowledge, experience, and loyalty have been invaluable, and without their guidance, the program would have been lesser for it.



From left:
Dr. James R. Watson
and Dr. Paul E. Rieke.