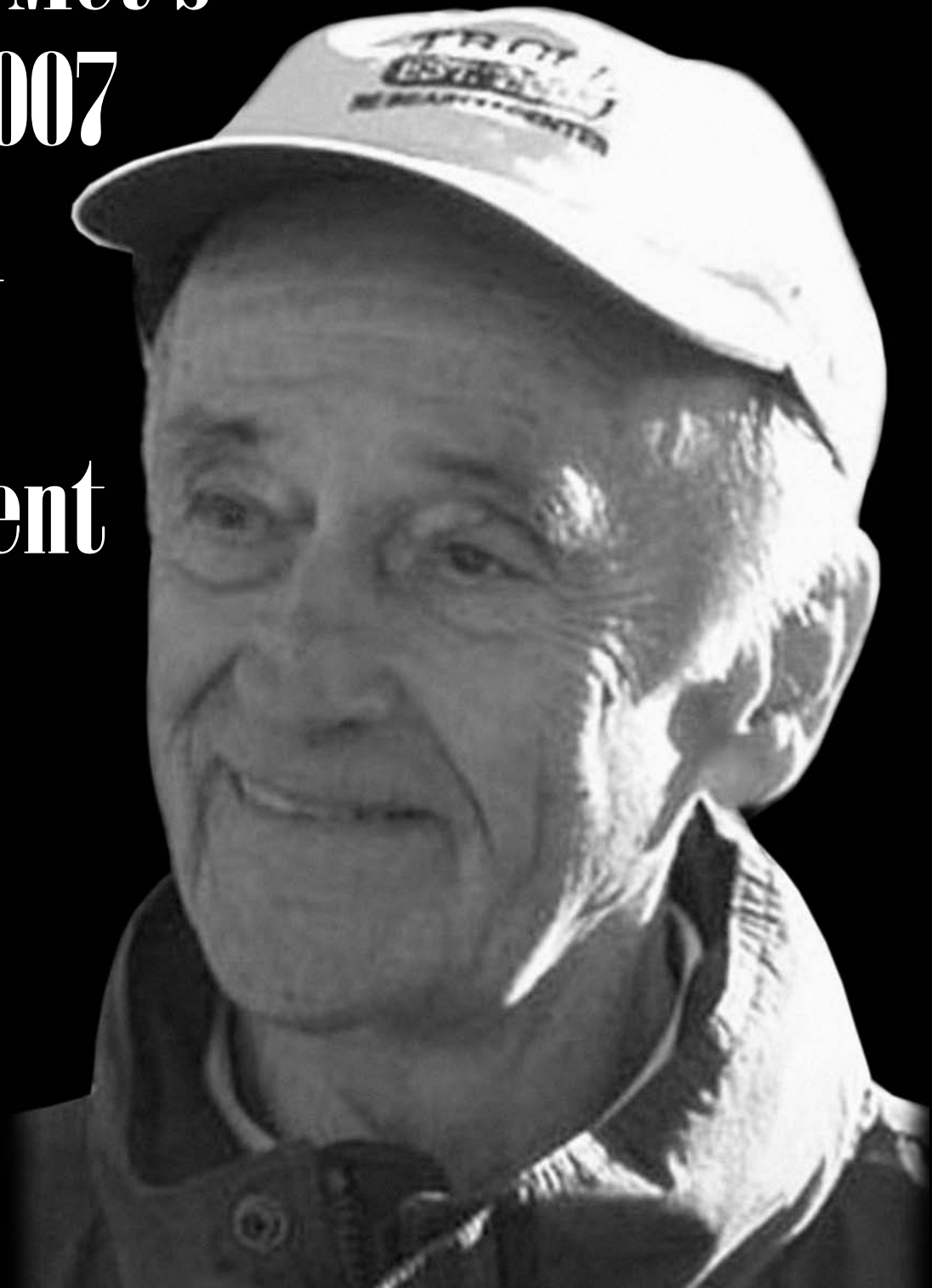


Feature

Professor Emeritus Dr. Joe Troll Earns the Met's Coveted 2007 John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award

by Stephen J. Curry



Forever etched in the memory of his students: Professor Troll at work in his heyday.



In keeping with the tradition of presenting the John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award to a person who has made an indelible mark on the game of golf and the science of golf course management, the MetGCSA has chosen Dr. Joseph Troll to receive its 2007 Reid Award.

Though now a professor *emeritus* of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Massachusetts—retired since 1985—Dr. Troll needs little introduction. His work as an educator, researcher, and extension specialist are near legendary—even among those new to the turfgrass management industry.

In announcing Dr. Troll's selection, MetGCSA Awards Committee Chair Will Heintz describes him first and foremost as "a tremendous supporter of the golf course superintendent."

Will continues, "Dr. Troll has earned icon status in our industry by persistently supporting his students and unselfishly involving himself over the course of their careers. Even now, more than 20 years into retirement, he is still actively supporting golf course superintendents and, of course, turf research. It was Dr. Troll's guidance and support in recent years that were instrumental in the development and completion of the Center for Turfgrass Research bearing his name at UMass.

"We are proud," says Will, "to add his name to our venerable list of Reid Award recipients."

Equally pleased to learn of Dr. Troll's selection for the Met's coveted award was former student and golf-course-superintendent-turned-consultant, Ted Horton. Now sole proprietor of Ted Horton Consulting in Canyon Lake, CA, he credits Dr. Troll with his success as superintendent at some of the country's top courses—Winged Foot, Westchester, and Pebble Beach among them. Says Ted: "I am finding

it difficult to express my feelings for the person who has affected my life and career so positively for 40-plus years, and I am only one of many hundreds of past students who feel the same. I am so pleased the MetGCSA is honoring Dr. Troll. He is such a deserving individual who has selflessly given so much to our profession."

But Ted and the Met aren't the first to find Dr. Troll's contributions noteworthy. There's GCSAA, which awarded Dr. Troll its Distinguished Service Award, normally reserved for researchers. The Stockbridge School, which not once, but three times elected him Outstanding Professor of the Year. And then there are the USGA awards—first the Green Section Award, then the Ike Grainger Award, which recognizes individuals who have volunteered their time and talent to the game of golf for 25 years. The list goes on . . . and on . . . to include numerous local chapter honors and more.

From GI Joe to Educator

With his many accolades and accomplishments in the field of turfgrass management, you would think Dr. Troll was one of those who knew from the time he could crawl that he was destined for a career in the sciences, particularly growing up under the influence of a chemist father. But interestingly, Dr.

Troll took an unconventional route to his ultimate career as educator.

He left his Paterson, NJ, high school at 17 to join the Navy. After three years, his tour of duty ended and he entered the workforce . . . until World War II broke out. He reenlisted in the Navy and served in the Atlantic as chief petty officer. In 1945, he received an Honorable Discharge, but instead of rushing out in search of a job, the young Joe Troll decided to return to school. "After my time in the workforce, I knew there was a better way to make a living and that it started with school," he says.

He completed his high school degree and, under the GI Bill, enrolled in the University of Rhode Island, where he went on to receive both his B.S. in Agronomy, *summa cum laude*, and his M.S. in Plant Pathology.

In 1957, he was "shipped up," as he puts it, to the University of Massachusetts, where he joined the department of Plant and Soil Sciences as an instructor. Two years later, Dr. Troll was promoted to professor. He was responsible for teaching graduate and undergraduate courses, conducting an eight-week Winter School for turfgrass managers, and teaching courses in a two-year program at the Stockbridge School, which was, in his tenure, dubbed the Harvard of Turf Management.

Dr. Troll not only taught at UMass, he was also a student there, earning, in 1965, his Ph.D., with a thesis on nematology.

The Mentor

Throughout his years in the industry, Dr. Troll has conducted research projects, published scientific journal papers, and served as an advisor and contributor to turfgrass magazines. But most important, Dr. Troll has focused a large part of his time and effort on educating—and providing guidance to—his students . . . 1,100 in all.

Self-admittedly, he was tough. "I pushed

Dr. Joseph Troll strikes a pose with his wife, Yolanda "Lonnie" Troll, at the dedication ceremony at UMass's new Center for Turfgrass Research, a building that now bears his name.



my students hard because I wanted to be sure they were up for the difficulty of the job," he says, all the while keeping his ear to the grapevine, waiting to hear of just the right position for just the right student.

His far-reaching contacts made it possible to help place students in some of the most prestigious golf course positions throughout the nation. Many clubs trusted his judgment. He was often the go-to person when a club was looking to hire a superintendent.

And yet, once out of sight, his students were never out of mind. Dr. Troll always recalled his students' names and backgrounds and kept tabs on their whereabouts—from internship on through their careers.

Even in retirement, Dr. Troll still holds his former students near and dear. "I love visiting my students, walking their courses, and seeing the beauty they create—that is, unless you take the game too seriously; that can ruin it all," he says with a smile.

those behind-the-scenes tasks that were essential to the conference's success. She, together with Dr. Troll, dedicated many years to building both the turf conference's program and attendance, obviously with great effect.

Well, now, Dr. Troll may be retired, but he's not out of touch. As an honorary member of numerous superintendents' associations on the local, national, and international level, he still follows along with much of the industry's news and, of course, his graduates.

Though he has won many awards on the highest level, he stands very proud as this year's John Reid Lifetime Achievement Award winner.

"Having been retired for more than 20 years, it always makes me feel good inside to be honored and remembered by my students," he says.

Stephen Curry, president of the UMass Alumni Turf Group, is superintendent at Berkshire Hills Country Club in Pittsfield, MA.

Standing Proud

When accolades are flying, Dr. Troll is quick to include his wife of 64 years, Yolanda "Lonnie" Troll, who some say "seems to have extended her husband's arm." She, too, has served the turf business. No small contribution was her work as secretary to the Massachusetts Turf Conference, performing

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