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Bucky Freeman

continued from page 25

seating for approximately 700 persons.

During the season, Johnson says he usually put in 60-hour weeks, and enjoyed every minute of them. "I just loved working on the field," he says. "I wanted to be there."

"Steve did a great job with baseball, but he also did a great job with football and our other fields," says Robert Deming, director of athletics for Ithaca College. "He called me the day after he found out he'd won the [Diamond of the Year] award. I wasn't aware he'd entered us, but I also wasn't surprised he won. I'm extremely pleased to

see him get the recognition. Visiting teams think very highly of our facilities-they show pride."

Johnson's philosophy of field maintenance is simple. "I always tried to leave the field a little better than when I'd walk on."

In August 1990, Johnson walked off the diamond as a groundskeeper with a passion for improvement for the last time. His wife, Karen, says his decision to leave for his current supervisorial position was agonizing.

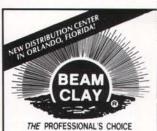
"Leaving the field really tore him apart," she remembers. "His whole heart and soul were in that field."

His position has been filled by two men,

Randy Snyder and Dave Keeler, and Johnson does not interfere with them. He knows what it takes for one man to do the job, and even two will have their hands full. Still, he can't resist taking a look from time to time.

"One of the buildings that we take care of is above the side of the field, and every now and then I take a walk down there to check it out," he reveals. "I reminisce a lot-an awful lot."

Some dreams never die, especially those that start when we're very young. Golf & sportsTURF salutes Steve Johnson and Bucky Freeman Field, the 1990 Beam Clay College Diamond of the Year.



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