



Manager of the Year Schiller (right) receives an award from Dr. Bill Daniel.
Photo courtesy: Mike Trigg.

Mike Schiller — sportsTURF's Manager of the Year

Ask anyone about Mike Schiller, and before you get the words, you get the smile. This is a genuinely nice guy, a stand-out, standup, man of commitment. Mike not only lives up to his principles, he sweeps others along with him on the straight and narrow path of dedication.

We'll recount his work history, his record of service to the industry, his list of accomplishments and well-deserved awards. But you've really "gotta" talk to his vast network of friends and colleagues and hear the heartfelt way he talks about them to get the true measure of this man.

His excitement about the future of the sports turf industry and for the Sports Turf Managers Association is so great his enthusiasm is contagious.

Developing a Pattern

What led Mike to this profession? Maybe it was his love of the Cubs and fascination with Wrigley Field; maybe the example of Fred Stice, his mentor in that first golf course job; or of Master Sergeant Floyd Hughes during his Air Force days. Maybe it was the encouragement of Ed Metcalf and Randy Illg of the parks-and-rec pro-

gram at Harper College. Maybe it was the connection with Harry Gill, or the influence of Dr. Bill Daniel, Dick Ericson, George Toma, David Frey, Dr. Kent Kurtz, Steve Wightman, Greg Petry, ... the list goes on and on.

sportsTURF's

Managers of the Year

- 1st (1989) — Dr. Fred Grau
- 2nd (1990) — Harry Gill
- 3rd (1991) — Murray Cook
- 4th (1992) — George Toma
- 5th (1993) — Roger Bossard
- 6th (1994) — Dr. Kent Kurtz
- 7th (1995) — Ed Birch
- 8th (1996) — Steve Wightman
- 9th (1997) — Floyd Perry
- 10th (1998) — Mike Schiller

Maybe it was the steadfast support and encouragement of his wife, Charlotte, and their four children, of his mom, his brothers, ... maybe it was this whole combination of people, events and circumstances *and then some* that shaped the package that is Mike Schiller.

Mike worked on the golf course for

Stice while studying for an associate of arts degree. He graduated from Harper College in August of 1969.

Reluctant to borrow more funds for college, Schiller joined the Air Force in November of 1969. Soon he was on base and on the field in Mississippi, dragging and lining fields and cutting grass as an "athletic and recreation specialist."

Mike and Charlotte were married in 1971, just 10 days after Mike's orders for reassignment to Alaska came through. Soon "Char" was teaching elementary music while Mike was discovering indoor-athletic-facility maintenance and learning how to fit baseball and football into a 90-day growing season. To supplement their income, he became a certified athletic official in baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, football and wrestling — which gave him a chance to see sports from the other side.

Next came Shepherd Air Force Base in Texas, where Mike became a physical-training instructor for German and Iranian student pilots.

Desire to be closer to family took Mike out of the service and back to Chicago in the fall of 1976. True to form, the Schillers arrived on a Friday night, Mike read the want ads on

Saturday morning and he applied for and got a parks maintenance staff position at the Mt. Prospect Park District the following Monday. Six months later, Mike was hired as foreman in the Village of Libertyville, and before long he became superintendent of parks, overseeing 400 acres of parks-and-rec property with a \$200,000 budget.

He went back to Harper College in Palatine, Ill., and earned his associate degree in park and grounds operations management in 1980.

Then, in 1981, the position of director of landscape and facilities maintenance opened up in Northbrook. Mike moved up to 450 acres of property, a 27-hole golf course and driving range with miniature golf course and a quarter-mile velodrome. He assisted in managing a \$900,000-plus budget. A life-long pattern was developing.

An offer he couldn't refuse took Mike to a sales position with Arthur Clesen Inc. from February 1985 to July 1987, and again from August 1989 to December 1992. In between he held the director of parks position with Glenview Park District, where he oversaw the \$900,000-plus budget and the planning and operations of over 350 acres of parks and leased recreational properties.

Mike missed the parks, so in December of 1992 he left his second stint at Arthur Clesen Inc. He became assistant superintendent of parks and planning for the Schaumburg Park District and worked with another mentor, Dan Otto. Besides assisting with the budgeting and operations of over 800 acres of parks-and-rec property, Mike selected and maintained the computer program for tracking employee hours.

In April of 1996, he moved up to his present position, Superintendent of Parks for the Rolling Meadows Park District, where he oversees the budget, planning and maintenance of all buildings and grounds. He's also working toward a degree in recreation management at Aurora University, with completion scheduled for 1998.

Carrying on the Dream

Mike became involved in STMA even before it was STMA. Soccer was blossoming — as were players' demands for on-field time — so Mike sought to upgrade his skills. He



Schiller (sitting) meets with the STMA board. Standing (left to right) are Rich Moffitt, Bob Curry, Henry Indyk, Steve Guise, Bucky Trotter, Mary Owen, Eugene Mayer and Greg Petry. Photo courtesy: Trusty & Associates.



Taking a break from an STMA board meeting in Phoenix, Schiller visits with Grant Trenbeath, head groundskeeper for the Arizona Diamondbacks, at the team's new stadium. Photo courtesy: Trusty & Associates.

How Others See Schiller

Floyd Perry, last year's Manager of the Year: "Mike is one of the greats in our industry, and I'm personally happy that our industry magazine recognizes his talents and abilities. My groundskeeper's hat goes off to Mike."

Eugene Mayer, STMA board member: "Mike is devoted to the industry and works hard for it. And when it comes to supporting STMA, he's so enthusiastic it's like baseball fever. A lot of us talk about STMA; he preaches it."

Mary Owen, STMA board member: "I don't know anybody who cares more about people in the industry than Mike."

attended Erik Madisen's 1980 clinic in Kansas City, where he toured the stadiums with George Toma and first became acquainted with Harry Gill. That led Mike to the 1981 clinic in Chicago. Mike rushed into the room a few minutes late, and Dr. Bill Daniel congratulated Mike on his appointment as vice president of a new organization — STMA.

Soon he was helping Dick Ericson, Harry Gill, Barney Barron, Steve Wightman and David Frey, who were among the core of leaders getting the budding association on its feet. During the STMA meeting in Denver several months later, Dr. Kent Kurtz became the first executive director, and STMA was rolling.

"Harry's dream," Mike says, "was for an organization where information flowed freely between the members, and where it was acknowledged that the need for good, safe playing conditions is as important for very young athletes as it is for pro players. I'm proud of what STMA has accomplished toward that dream and of the direction we're headed for the future."

Mike has only missed two or three years of "on the board" service since 1981. He moved into the president-elect position in 1994, partly due to the urging of Greg Petry, whom Mike had nudged onto the board at the Vero Beach meeting that year. Mike will wrap up two years as president of STMA at the annual meeting in January 1998.

Parallel to this impressive record of service to STMA is Mike's service to parks and recreation through the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) and the Midwest Institute of Park Executives (MIPE). He's been a member of IPRA since 1978, serving in the Parks and Natural Resource Management section as its current treasurer and as Metro Area representative to the board from 1996 to 1997.

Mike has been a member of MIPE



From left to right, STMA Honorary Life Member Dick Ericson, Executive Director Steve Trusty and President Mike Schiller visit during a meeting in Minnesota this year. Photo courtesy: Trusty & Associates.



At Rice & Arlington Sports Dome, Schiller (left) participates in the Minnesota Chapter's 3rd Workshop on Wheels. Photo courtesy: Trusty & Associates.

since 1978, and has served as golf outing chair, membership chair, program chair, and member of the board of trustees. He earned the MIPE Professional of the Year Award in both 1982 and 1996, the MIPE Presidents Award for Dedication and Service to the Association in 1989, and STMA's Harry Gill Award in 1993.

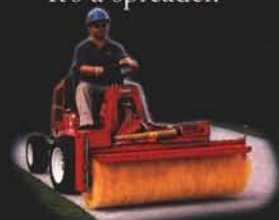
"A lot of great people help me enjoy what I do," Mike says. "They've taught me to focus on long-range planning and daily demands without losing sight of what it's all about. The most important thing about the job is providing a safe and secure facility for people to have fun."

Mike will tell you that he's been blessed in this life. Commitment, dedication, character and plain ol' hard work had a lot to do with it. □

THE NEW GROUNDS PRO™ IS MORE THAN A MOWER.



It's a spreader.



It's a sweeper.



It's a dump cart.



It's a blower.



It's a sprayer.

IT'S A GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SYSTEM

For a free Grounds Pro 2000 video, request one through our website at www.toro.com/grounds/sports.

TORO

©1998 The Toro Company

Circle 104 on Postage Free Card