DR. TONY KOSKI HAS BEEN CHOSEN Sportsturf's 2002 Manager of the Year by his new peer group, the previous winners of the award. The reason Tony was selected this year is perhaps best described by Abby McNeal, the assistant turfgrass manager for INVESCO Field @ Mile High, Denver:

"Tony has always been available to answer questions or to offer advice. He has helped me as an academic advisor through college and after graduation, for the past 7 1/2 years. Tony has made countless visits to my job sites, to just stop by and talk about the fields. The advice and guidance he has offered me throughout my young turf career is irreplaceable."

Kalin Stovall, Colorado State University sports turf manager, says Dr. Koski is involved and helpful. "He's introduced me to people that I've learned from, and he's great at networking. If he doesn't know the answer to a question, he'll connect you to someone who does know the answer," says Stovall. "He couldn't make our last home football game this year but was listening to it on the radio; late in the game he heard it was 'slippery' so he called me after the game to find out what had happened. The field had started to frost up a bit was all, but Tony wanted to check in with me on it."

"He's so involved. On top of his teaching, horticulture research, working with students and graduate students, the Turf Club, involvement in the Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association where, for example, this year he's an integral part of the upcoming conference," Stovall continues. "He never says 'no.'"

"He's always trying to educate, and help people in this industry land on their feet. He's incredibly knowledgeable whether it's knowing the tried and true methods or the latest websites to check out. He has hands-on experience too, he's not just all about books," says Stovall.

Steve Wightman, ST's Manager of the Year in 1996, says, "I met Tony in 1988 when he interviewed at CSU. He was of course, the unanimous choice. Tony has been a profound inspirational leader in the turfgrass industry. His quiet unassuming demeanor commands attention in the classroom, whether he's making a formal address to a high-tech audience or a simple speech to a group of students. Tony is an Honorary Member of the Colorado Chapter of STMA."

Suz Trusty says, "He's a mentor for more students and former students than I can count. This year, the two Dr. James Watson Scholarship recipients are from the Colorado State turf program, undergrad Don Frantz and graduate student James Newberry. Tony has a wonderful ability to provide information in a format his audience can understand, whether he's making a formal address to a high-tech audience or an on-field clinic for a group that has never tackled a sports field project before, or talking one-to-one with anyone. Besides that, he's a genuinely nice guy!" "Tony realizes the importance of sports turf management and the abilities of sports turf managers, and he promotes that nationwide. He's dedicated to the importance of athletic fields and those who take care of them at all levels, park and rec to professional," says Dave Rulli, STMA board member and stadium manager at Jeffco Stadium, Lakewood, CO.

"He's always available and always willing to help. Tony bridges the gap between the professional level at Coors Field or Invesco to guys at the high school level. He connects people through email, giving an on-field clinic for a group that has never tackled a sports field project before, or talking one-to-one with anyone. Besides that, he's a genuinely nice guy!" "He's very deserving."

Tony's vision

"I believe that education is of paramount importance to the formation and continued development of the sports turf manager. The importance of education has become even more evident to me through involvement with the STMA Certification program, as a current Board member, and as a speaker at a number of STMA Chapter meetings across the country," says Tony on the STMA website.

"I sense a genuine need and demand for quality education among sports turf managers everywhere. The STMA is working hard to fill those needs via the national conference, Sportsturf and newsletter, through chapter support, and with the initiation of the Certification Program. It is exciting for me to participate in these endeavors."