

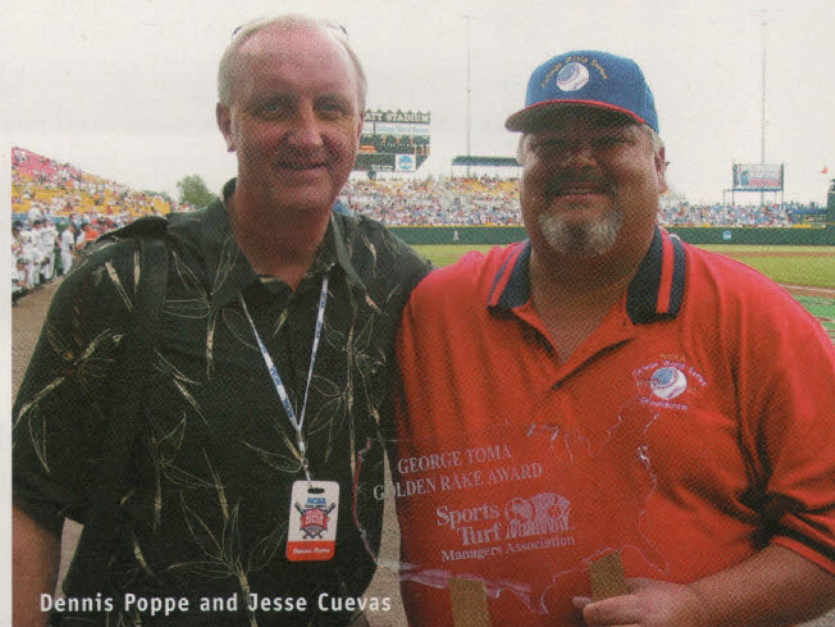
Jesse Cuevas honored at CWS

The NCAA added another special event to the 2003 College World Series (CWS). Between games June 15 Jesse Cuevas, stadium superintendent for Omaha's Rosenblatt Stadium, stepped up to home plate to receive top honors from the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA). Cuevas received the Association's 2002 George Toma Golden Rake Award from STMA executive director Steve Trusty.

Cuevas had been scheduled to speak at the STMA's Annual Conference last winter, and the award would have been presented at the Awards Banquet during that event. But Cuevas was advised not to fly because of an inner ear infection, and he had assumed his Award would be mailed to him.

Instead, upon hearing of the missed opportunity for the formal presentation, Dennis Poppe, the NCAA's director of championships, arranged for the ceremony in Omaha. Just before the start of the Stanford-Cal State Fullerton game, the PA announcer directed the crowd's attention to home plate for the presentation. The fans responded with a rousing round of applause.

This Award was named for one of the Founders of STMA, George Toma, whose work with the Kansas City Royals, and with the National Football League on Super Bowl field preparation, has made him one of the Association's most high profile members.



Dennis Poppe and Jesse Cuevas

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The recipient of this Award is an individual who is on that quest to reach their goals and is demonstrating the "and then some" spirit which is so much a part of Toma's approach to sports turf management.

Cuevas has demonstrated the "and then some" factor throughout his career. He started at Rosenblatt as a ball shagger and earned his way onto the grounds crew and to the top position through his eagerness to learn every aspect of sports turf management.

Rosenblatt Stadium is not only home of the Kansas City Royals Triple-A affiliate, it is the site of such other events as concerts, scout camp outs, minor league football games, and numerous fireworks displays. For 2 weeks each year, Cuevas serves as an ambassador for the sports turf profession as he interacts with all the college, NCAA, and media personnel who gather for the CWS. And he keeps the field in great shape throughout the event. He also has coordinated the field construction upgrades that have been a frequent occurrence at Rosenblatt to accommodate the CWS. In addition, he has become a mentor to many turf professionals. His outstanding dedication and commitment exemplify the standards recognized by the George Toma Golden Rake Award.

In typical fashion, Cuevas was quick to credit his crew saying, "They should put the 'Rosenblatt Stadium Ground Crew,' on this instead of my name, because those are the guys who get the work done. They figure out the crazy ideas I come up with and they implement them." Cuevas also credited former Rosenblatt Stadium head groundskeeper Frank Mancuso and George Toma for shaping his career, saying, "Between Frank and George, I don't know how anybody could have had two better teachers." **ST**

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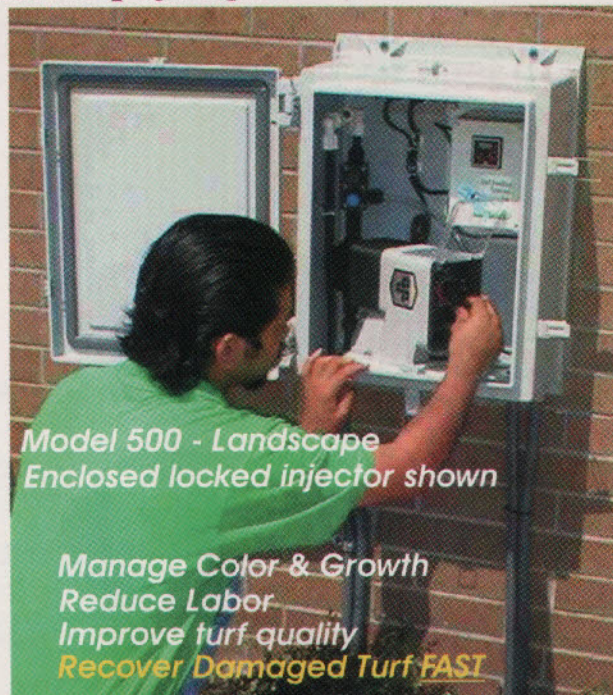
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