

Achieving the pinnacle to success

One of the first dozen CSFMs ... his innovative approach towards field maintenance and enthusiasm for the profession has provided inspiration ... a founding member of his STMA Chapter ... at the forefront of IPM ... has helped countless municipalities and schools construct and manage sports fields ... compassion, diligence, and kindness is a true representation of the award qualities."

These are just a few excerpts from the Founders Award nomination forms that illustrate the merits of our four 2007 Founders Award recipients. The winners were Mike McDonald, CSFM, Turf Manager at the University of Minnesota, the Dick Ericson award; Dr. James McAfee, Extension Turfgrass Specialist at Texas A&M, the Dr. William H. Daniel award; Todd Jeansonne, Sports Turf Manager at Louisiana State University and Jeff Kershaw, Director of Maintenance, West Baton Rouge Parrish School Board, sharing the George Toma Golden Rake award; and Boyd R. Montgomery, CSFM, the Harry C. Gill award.

A peer nominated each of these award winners. All of us in sports turf management know members in this industry who advance and serve this profession. Please take a moment to nominate a peer for a Founders Award on the nomination form (p. 46). To help you determine which of the Founders Awards is most appropriate for your nomination, please review the contributions of these early leaders and the specific qualifications required.

Dick Ericson made significant contributions to the STMA including serving as its first

President in 1981 and 1982. He has, and continues to have, an impact in raising the level of professionalism within the industry. This award is issued annually to someone who plans and executes the sports turf management of their facility, who effectively leads their team to accomplish their goals, and who positively impacts the sports turf industry.

Specific Qualifications:

- At least five years of service in a sports field-related position.
- Member of STMA
- Job performance and work ethic that consistently meets or exceeds expectations
- Management techniques that make the most of existing resources
- Efficient and effective personnel management
- Constantly improves the management program, introducing creative and innovative ideas to enhance the field management program
- Receptive to ideas and creative skills of staff members and other industry professionals
- Supportive of and works to increase professionalism within the sports turf industry.

McDonald's tribute to Ericson: "It was a great honor to win this award, especially one that the founder is from my home state (Minnesota—2007 Chapter Clash Champs). I never personally worked with Dick, but was inspired to follow his work ethics and skills from the stories I heard of the events he hosted at the Met over his long career. He was a great teacher to his fellow turf managers; he

shared a lot of knowledge and experiences."

Dr. William H. Daniel set the standard for educator and researcher involvement in the STMA and created a partnership between sports turf managers and academics. To honor all that he achieved, this award recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to the sports turf industry through his or her research, teaching or extension outreach.

Specific Qualifications:

- Member of STMA
- Research: Conducted research that is relevant and has practical implications for the sports turf industry and/or was published in a professional journal
- Teaching/Extension: Developed or executed teaching/extension programs that educate sports turf managers and helped to expose outstanding individuals to the profession.

McAfee, this year's winner, actually studied under Dr. Daniel during his doctoral studies. He shares his thoughts on winning this award: "First, anytime you win an award that is voted on by the individuals you work with and for, it is a great honor. To be recognized by your peers is one of the greatest honors a person can receive. Secondly, to win an award named after my major professor meant a lot to me personally. Bill Daniel had a great influence on my career in turfgrass and to receive an award in his name was very special. It brought back a lot of memories of my days working with Dr. Daniel."

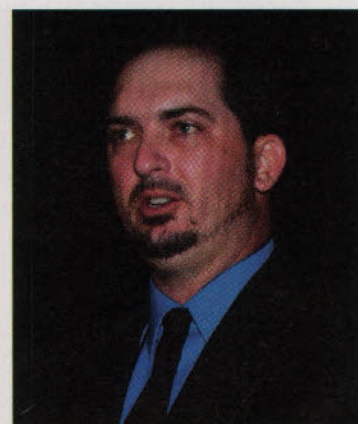
George Toma continues to serve as a mentor for many of those in the sports turf



Dr. James McAfee, winner of the Dr. William H. Daniel Award pictured with the 2006 winner Jeff Fowler.



Boyd Montgomery, CSFM, winner of the Harry C. Gill Award pictured with 2006 winner Bob Christofferson.



Todd Jeansonne, co-winner of the George Toma Award.

STMA in Action

industry and emphasizes the importance of the entire Crew in effective sports turf management. He has also proven that it is possible to achieve your highest goals – if you love what you do and give it your all – and then some.

Specific Qualifications:

- Member of STMA
- At least two years of service in a sports field-related position
- Job performance that consistently meets or exceeds expectations
- Work ethic that consistently meets or exceeds expectations
- Offers ideas and brings creative skills to the department in a professional manner
- Assists in additional non-job related sports events and activities for the community
- Is a true believer in the “and then some” tradition of grounds maintenance.

Kershaw's thoughts about being a co-winner of the Toma Award:

“I think the George Toma Award is as prestigious an award as you can receive in the

STMA. It means the world to me professionally and personally. I am humbled that my fellow professionals thought enough of Todd and my work and sacrifice in the wake of Hurricane Katrina to both nominate us and select us to receive this award. I have no doubt that any of my colleagues in this profession would have made the same sacrifices. The group of individuals that make up our profession are among the most selfless and generous people I have ever been around.

“What makes this award even more special to me is that I was able to get to know George Toma both professionally and personally. He spent four months at LSU following Hurricane Katrina when the Saints played their games at Tiger Stadium. We certainly had apprehensions about George before he came. What we found in George was a very, very special human being. George went above and beyond the scope of what we had brought him in to do. He worried about me and Todd's well being, about the time we needed to spend with our families. He made

the lowest ranking man on the crew feel special about himself and his job, everyday. He is over 70 years old and outworked everyone. He supported us when times got tough with our administration. He never failed to give us credit in the media when the opportunity presented itself. When you hear George Toma say ‘and then some’, it's not something he just says, it is truly his philosophy of life.

“I think we lived a little of that philosophy with the hours we spent at LSU in the months following the tragic events of 2005. We did so much more than you would ever dream a sports turf manager would ever have to do. The things we saw and did I would not wish upon my worst enemy, but anything we suffered pales in comparison to what the real victims of Hurricane Katrina endured and continue to endure to this day.

“I am honored and humbled that my fellow sports turf managers recognized our work in those trying times and I think that my friend George Toma is proud of us for that work. I am so proud to be the recipient of an award

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named after George Toma and even prouder to call him my friend.”

Todd Jeansonne echoes Kershaw’s comments and adds: “Professionally, I have received more recognition than I have ever before both locally and regionally. I feel I am better known for what I do than I have been in the past. Personally, it means a great deal more to me because we were graced to have Mr. Toma work with us for several months. To be able to absorb his knowledge, his encouragement from the top of my staff to the little man, and to enjoy the friendship of the wonderful person Mr. Toma, is something I wish everyone in our profession could experience. He did more for me and my staff personally in just a few months than most people could do in a lifetime. He truly touched every one of us in his own special way. His phrase “And Then Some” is the bible he lives his life by every day, and he spilled that over to all of us here at LSU. So, to win an award with his name on it is very hard to put in words because the feeling is overwhelming, as everyone saw when I received the award at the conference in January. I hope only that I can live my life as graciously as Mr. Toma.”

Harry C. Gill was STMA’s Founders second President, serving in that capacity from 1982-1983. His commitment to the sports turf profession and his desire and efforts to nurture the young STMA organization are legendary among those who were fortunate to have known him. This award was established to honor an individual for their hard work in the sports turf industry and to acknowledge their dedication to STMA. The Award itself is a rather unique piece of art, depicting a groundskeeper armed with the tools of his trade: a rake of hope; a hose of determination; a shovel of passion; a hoe of dedication; and a smile of spirited uncertainty as he rides off into the unknown atop a horse named Desire.

Required Qualifications:

- STMA Membership
- Outstanding ability and commitment to the sports turf industry
- Professional involvement and service to the STMA on a local, regional and national level
- Professional leadership in promoting STMA, its members and the sports turf industry
- Contribution of written communications in articles, magazines, manuals, legislation and/or research.

Montgomery credits others for the Gill honor:

“Many of my interactions with the turf industry and STMA have been more of a team effort than an individual one. While it is a person that is honored it truly is the foundation and supporters that deserve the credit. Many of my previous employees, friends, family, and mentors really deserve the credit. They have given me encouragement, council, and debate at critical times of my life. This has challenged me to grow professionally to succeed. They have also instilled in me the drive to be EXCELLENT. I think that is the key! Many strive to be good but few strive to be Excellent. When your mind changes to thinking about everything in those terms, you position yourself as a proactive person that can be leading the charge instead of reacting to what cards are dealt. Being blessed with this honor humbles you personally and professionally. I truly want to say THANK YOU to those that have impacted my journey!” ■

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