



You were nominated by your peers as one of the “Most Influential People in the Green Industry.” How do you feel that you influence other industry professionals?

**Yelverton:** It is humbling to receive such recognition from my peers. To be nominated by my peers is the greatest of all compliments. Hopefully, in some small way, I have simply helped industry professionals do their jobs in a way that helps their business or career.

What do you feel has been your biggest contribution to the green industry so far? And what do you see as your role in the future of the industry?

**Yelverton:** Hopefully, I have helped with managing weeds and turfgrasses in a way that is environmentally sound and economically viable. I continue to see my role in the industry as someone who can help the green industry effectively manage weeds with no adverse environmental consequences. In essence, I see my role as helping to provide turfgrass managers with tools that help them be more successful. Along the way, through my research program, I want to contribute to the science and help my colleagues move turfgrass science forward.

Who has influenced you both personally and professionally?

**Yelverton:** Professionally, I would have to say it is Dr. Harold Coble. He was my advisor on my Masters degree and he encouraged me to pursue what I am doing now. Harold is a weed scientist with tremendous insight into the agricultural industry as well as advising people on career choices. His advice has certainly served me well over the years.

Personally, it would have to be my parents. My father was a farmer who certainly instilled a work ethic in me that still is with me today. His message to me was, you work hard and good things will happen. My mother was an elementary school teacher for more than 30 years. She was very gifted intellectually and taught me the importance of an

education at a very young age. So the combination of having parents that stressed hard work and the importance of an education eventually led me to pursue and obtain a PhD. To obtain a PhD, you can be the smartest person in the world but if you lack the work ethic, it will never happen. A PhD is an exercise in determination and endurance.

Tell us something about yourself outside of work (hobby, sport or other personal interest) that influences your approach in your professional career.

**Yelverton:** I have lots of interests outside of work. I really enjoy saltwater fishing including both inshore and offshore. I am an avid runner and run 25 miles/week and participate in multiple races each year. I also enjoy playing golf. But most importantly, I love to spend time with my family. I have an 11-year-old son and we do lots of things together.

What dreams do you have for the industry? What change(s) are necessary to make those dreams a reality?

**Yelverton:** It is great to see the green industry continue to grow. The green industry has become so large that we now are a major player in the agricultural industry. As the green industry continues to grow, we must do a good job of documenting our financial impact. This will give us greater political clout in the future.

What advice do you have for green industry professionals who want to become influential leaders themselves?

**Yelverton:** Green industry professionals that want to be leaders must be highly visible in the industry. This includes service to the industry, including, but not limited to, various boards, writing articles, opinions, etc. We are all busy but leadership requires that we take leadership roles.



Bob has been an innovator and leader in the sports turf industry for almost 40 years. He has been an active member and supporter

of the sports turf, golf, stadium managers and educational facility managers throughout the world.

How do you feel that you influence other industry professionals?

**Curry:** I feel my involvement with the Sports Turf Managers Association has made people more aware of our industry. And, equally important, what the benefits a safer playing surface means to all levels of turf sports. Since my early involvement in the industry, I see more individuals stepping up as volunteers to help the industry move forward.

What do you feel has been your biggest contribution to the green industry so far? And what do you see as your role in the future of the industry?

**Curry:** Helping out wherever I could, getting involved in various committees and giving back in terms of time and travel. As more and more people get involved in the industry, and offering to help, I see my role a little less active but still my primary goal is to gain the recognition our turf managers deserve for the important role they play in producing top notch and safe turf surfaces—often at times when budgets are tight and with lack of supplies and personnel.

Who has influenced you both personally and professionally?

**Curry:** My biggest influence in this industry is the people I have met. All the friends I have made through the years are the most rewarding thing a person could ask for. You will never find a more dedicated group then turf groundskeepers willing to learn and improve their trade.

What dreams do you have for the industry? What change(s) are necessary to make those dreams a reality?

**Curry:** As a member of the STMA, I want to see it grow in membership. Easier said than done but, if one was to look closely into what the association offers in terms of education, certification programs and sharing knowledge, it is one of the best bargains for anyone in the turf industry.

The STMA is constantly improving the services they provide members. It is truly a source of knowledge to the sports turf industry. For this reason, the growth in membership will be achieved. Reaching out to the international markets throughout the world through chapter affiliations will help grow the association in the future.