

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources awarded the Distinguished Service Award to Agriculture at the President's Luncheon on April 6 during Ag and Natural Resources Days (formerly called Farmers Week). This award is presented to individuals who provide exemplary service to the college and the industries served by the college. Gordy was recognized for his leadership within the turf industry as well as for various other agricultural industries in Michigan. This award follows others - the Meritorious Service Award from the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, the Honorary Alumni Award from the MSU Ag Alumni Association and the Honorary Member Award from the Michigan Future Farmers of America (also awarded in 1997).

For 27 years Gordy has worked in sales for, and ultimately as President of Lawn Equipment Corporation, a company that sold equipment for both professional turf managers and homeowners. Three years ago he sold the company and bought a nine hole golf course at Houghton Lake, MI. He promptly added another nine holes and is developing property around the course.

In every venture with which Gordy gets involved, he gravitates to a position of leadership. This occurred in the Lawn Equipment Corporation, and in the local golf course superintendents and landscaping professional groups. It wasn't long before he was involved in the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, serving several years on the Board of Directors, and as President in 1979. In 1980 he was appointed Executive Secretary, a position he continues to hold. He is recognized as Mr. Michigan Turfgrass Foundation. Essentially everyone in the turf industry in Michigan knows Gordy. He is recognized as an innovative leader around the country, with turf foundations from several other states seeking his advice.

Among the programs developed with Gordy's leadership are the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center, the Founder's Society of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, the donations for turfgrass research to the MSU 2000 Capital Campaign, the turfgrass environmental Education pro-

gram at MSU, and the Turf Research Benefit Golf Days. One of his strengths is his ability to recognize leadership potential and get people involved. His "Can Do" attitude rubs off on other people. Through his encouragement, many of the leaders of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation have become effective speakers and more effective as leaders. Because of the success of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation and Gordy's leadership role, he has been invited to provide counsel to turfgrass foundations in many states. Both the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation and Michigan State University have benefited greatly because of Gordon LaFontaine has been here.

We are grateful for his dedicated and creative leadership. We encourage our MSU graduates to follow his example in providing key leadership in professional organizations.

Gordy was nominated by a number of individuals from the turfgrass and agriculture industry. He was then selected by a panel of rotating agricultural leaders. Gordy's picture will hang in Agricultural Hall with past winners of the award.

**Gordon LaFontaine**  
**Receives CANR Distinguished Service Award**



*Gordon LaFontaine, 1997 College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Distinguished Service Award recipient, thanks the attendees at the Presidents Luncheon during Ag & Natural Resources Days. To his left are MSU President, Peter McPherson, Gordy's wife Eilien, and Presenter, Dr. Fred Poston, Dean of Agriculture.*