

Chris Stiegler Turfgrass Science Graduate Student Travel Award

On Dec. 24, 2010, the turfgrass academic community lost one of its brightest young scholars, when James Christopher (Chris) Stiegler and his wife, Jenny, were killed in an automobile accident in Texas while travelling to be with their family for the holidays. Chris received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in turfgrass management at Oklahoma State University and worked for a period of time as an assistant golf course superintendent in Wichita, KS and as a Cooperative Extension Agent in Oklahoma. Chris completed a PhD in turfgrass science at the University of Arkansas in May of 2010 and was an assistant professor of turfgrass ecology and physiology at Texas A&M University in College Station TX in August, 2010.

The C5 (Turfgrass Science) Division of the Crop Science Society of America (CSSA) has long-recognized the importance of graduate students to the health and vitality of our organization and we have many programs in place to support and encourage graduate student participation in the meetings. Chris Stiegler actively took part in CSSA as a graduate student as he was readying himself for a promising career. Although the Long Beach meeting in 2010 was his first as a faculty member, his contributions, and those of other graduate students, to the C5 division and turfgrass science should never be underestimated.

As a way to honor Chris's major contributions to the C5 Division of CSSA as a graduate student and to further encourage future scholars to participate in our meetings, a fund has been established that will be used to award travel grants each year to deserving graduate students in the C5 Division of CSSA.

This will be an endowed fund and awards will be made to a minimum of two students each year (initially proposing \$500 per student) to offset travel expenses to the meeting. Additional awards will be made pursuant to appropriate funding.

The Next Step: Funding the Endowment

In order to make this award a reality, a minimum of \$25,000 is needed in support to fully endow this fund. All members and supporters of the tri-societies are encouraged to support efforts to reach this milestone in a timely fashion. Although Chris was primarily affiliated with CSSA, Chris's father, Jim Stiegler, has been a long-standing member of ASA and SSSA and has many friends and supporters within our communities. If you would like to support this activity, donations can be submitted either by check or through a secure, online form.

To submit a check:

- Make checks out to ASF
- Note Chris Stiegler Fund on the memo line
- Send to: ASF
5585 Guilford Rd
Madison WI 53711

To submit a secure, online donation, select the **Chris Stiegler Graduate Student Travel Fund** from the dropdown list on the CSSA foundation website at:

<https://www.crops.org/foundation/donate>

There are likely many sources of funding within our academic community that might want to contribute to this fund. It would also be appropriate to approach turf industry associations, corporate entities, and private individuals, among others, to donate to this fund. If desired, portions of gifts can be earmarked as “available for immediate award”, such that awards can be made prior to the fund reaching an endowed level.

If you need any assistance in discussing this program with potential donors, please contact

Dr. Mike Richardson (mricha@uark.edu),

Dr. Richard White (rh-white@tamu.edu), or

Dr. Greg Bell (greg.bell@okstate.edu).