Game Banquet- 1978

Bob Houseman

Iowa State University

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Picture the scene: an early evening in mid-March, a banquet room with a warm atmosphere, capacity crowd feasting on the finest cuisine, and the entertainment of a very talented man whose stories and memories of the past draw roars of laughter.

In your mind maybe you pictured Bob Hope entertaining a contented crowd of voyagers aboard the SS Nordic Prince as it traverses its way amid the Caribbean Islands. On the other hand maybe you had pictured George Carlin with guests at the Copa Cabanna, or quite possibly you envisioned the well-known Dwight Bensend as he tantalizes a crowd of 200 foresters during one of the famous Forestry Club Game Banquets. If it is the latter vision that you had, then congratulations for being right on cue!

There are three reasons why this year's banquet proved extra special. First, the two designers of the feast, Clark Tiecke and Brian Heuer, worked hard and long to insure the finest food and entertainment this side of the Mississippi would be on tap. Second, after many years of the Club dipping into the red for this event, we managed to shine brightly in the black this year. Third, and yes, most important, this was our final farewell to a man we all love and deeply respect, Dr. Dwight W. Bensend. If ever a person could reach down into the hearts of all in attendance and bring forth the feelings of joy, compassion, responsibility, concern and love for the forestry profession he did that night with his gifted presentation.

Preceeding Dr. Bensend’s presentation was the recognition of those forestry students who were chosen to receive the Forestry Department’s various honorary awards. They were Dennis Haugen and Curt Krambeer, recipients of the J. Milton Cone Scholarship; Koral Santman, recipient of both the Hoo-Hoo Award and the Keith A. Bauer Award; George H. Mortensen, recipient of the Charles Strom Award; and Mike Cloughesy, recipient of the Society of American Foresters Senior Award.

To top off the evening Susan Klietsch recited a special poem selected to convey to Dr. Bensend how much he is appreciated and will be missed by the student body. He was then presented with the Forestry Club's farewell gift; a stretched and tanned deer hide latched to a frame made from eastern red cedar with the Forestry Club emblem burned into the center and encompassed by the signatures of all of us he had touched so deeply.

To say the least, it was an evening full of fun, laughter and many nostalgic emotions.

Bob Houseman