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- News from the SD Section of the Society for Range Management

Remembering Bob Gartner by Pat Johnson

Frank Robert "Bob" Gartner passed into the rangelands of heaven on June 26, 2021.

Bob was born Nov. 7, 1928, in Chicago, IL. He earned his B.S. in Range Management at the University of Wyoming in 1950. After serving two years in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, he was employed by the College of Forestry & Natural Resources at U.C., Berkeley, and completed his M.S. degree in Range and Forest Sciences there in 1956. Bob started his career teaching Range Science courses at SDSU from 1956 to 1964. Bob and his wife Barbara moved to Laramie, WY in 1964, where he received his Ph.D. After graduating, he taught Range Science courses at Colorado State University. Bob and Barb returned to Rapid City in 1968, where Bob was again employed by SDSU. He retired from SDSU in 1998 after nearly 50 years of an esteemed career in range and forest land research and education. Governor Janklow proclaimed Jan. 31, 1998, as "F. Robert Gartner Day" and awarded the lifetime title of Professor Emeritus of Range Science. Bob is survived by his wife, Barbara; son, Brett; daughter, Gina Lundstrom; grandchildren, Jayla and Alex; and Boots, his beloved poodle. He was preceded in death by a brother, Edward, who died as an infant; his mother, Esther; and father, Frank.

Bob was a Life Member of the Society for Range Management. He joined SRM on 1/1/1950, shortly after its founding. At the International level of SRM, he served on the Board of Directors and participated in many committees. He was also a member of the SD Section of SRM and served as President, Vice-President, and on the Board of Directors, as well as on various committees. His active involvement in the South Dakota Section of SRM cannot be overstated.

Bob's work on, and on behalf of rangelands was extensive. He taught range courses early in his career and mentored graduate students and technicians throughout his tenure at South Dakota State University. He provided leadership as the 5-state coordinator of the Old West Regional Range Program beginning in 1976. Outcomes of that program included the organization of youth range camps in each of the five states (South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana), and the development of the Old West Regional Range Judging contests, all of which continue to this day. They also developed three films on rangeland management. Bob conducted extensive research in several areas, including the impacts of contour furrowing and ripping on claypan, showing significant vegetation change occurring once the pan was disrupted. He also studied the use of prescribed fire on range and forested lands, examining, among other things, how fire might be used to control bluegrass encroachment. He has the honor of being the first person to ignite a prescribed burn in the Black Hills. He subsequently conducted prescribed burning on several ranches and properties in the region. Bob's work had a huge influence on the use of fire for desired outcomes by the Black Hills National Forest and Wind Cave National Park.

Bob loved his work with ranchers, students, and land management agency personnel. His influence on all of those continues to this day. He loved working outdoors, especially on the prairies and forested rangelands of South Dakota. Spending time with family, friends, and amazing neighbors, often over a glass of wine were moments he cherished most. One of Bob's

last wishes was to specifically thank all the many landowners, land managers, and students in SD, WY, ND, NE, CO, and CA -- all of whom touched his life and helped him to develop a strong land, water, wildlife, and conservation ethic.

Those of us who were honored to know and work with Bob lift a glass of good red wine in his memory for a job well done.

A memorial has been established with the South Dakota Section, Society for Range Management specifically for undergraduate education: SD-SRM Endowment, Attn: Dr. Ehlert, 711 N. Creek Drive, Rapid City, SD 57701. Bob's full obituary can be viewed at <https://www.osheimschmidt.com/obituary/frank-bob-gartner>. Online condolences can be left at www.osheimschmidt.com.