

TRIBUTE TO EARLE W. KLOSTERMAN

November 21, 2005

Earle W. Klosterman, was born October 3, 1919 in Plankinton, South Dakota, the second child of Peter and Anna Klosterman. His dad was a farmer and general livestock producer, growing corn, oats and alfalfa and raising cattle, hogs and chickens.

At the age of two, Earle contracted polio, which retarded growth of his right leg; but otherwise never disabled him from a life of achievement.

He rode horseback to a one room school near Presho, S. D.

His High School had a student body of about 100. He played football, was a member of the debate team and was class president in both his junior and senior years.

Earle remembers the depression years. During that time, his family endured economic hardship, drought, grasshopper plagues and dust storms; but survived in part through his dad's employment in government public works projects. He notes proudly that these were not handouts. The men kept their self respect as they worked on significant projects that were good for the community.

After High School graduation in 1937, he enrolled in the Animal Husbandry Department at South Dakota State University.

Based upon the recommendation of his local ag extension agent, Earle received a Sears and Roebuck Scholarship of \$100, which paid his tuition and fees for the full year. That doesn't sound like much today; but in the context of a laborer making 10 cents per hour, college was still expensive. To pay his room and board, Earle worked at odd jobs in the college barns, as shepherd for the University flock and by scrubbing floors at a local restaurant for meals. He graduated from college in 1942.

Earle earned his M. S. degree in 1943 and his Ph.D. in 1946 at Cornell University in the Animal Husbandry Department.

While at Cornell, Earle volunteered to be a subject in a human nutrition study on the daily requirement of vitamin C. Participants were given three free meals every day. The drawback was that all of the meals were the same. A young female graduate student conducting the trial, Ann Moore, noted that only one of the men followed the regimen without complaining. She decided a guy like that would make a pretty good husband. The rest is history. Ann and Earle recently celebrated sixty years of marriage by taking their three children and four grandchildren on a cruise of the Snake and Columbia Rivers.

After graduate school, Earle returned to his Alma Mater, SDSU, where he taught and studied animal nutrition and sheep production. His teaching led him to North Dakota State University and eventually, in 1952, to a full time research position at the OARDC.

He was subsequently promoted to full Professor in 1956 and served as Chairman of the Department from 1967-1980. He retired in 1980; but worked four more years in Lesotho, Africa under a USAID project.

Earle's work has been primarily involved with beef cattle and sheep production and management. He has authored many scientific papers and received many awards (**all of which will be mentioned in the website**) but he considers his 1971 Symposium paper entitled "Beef Cattle Size for Maximum Efficiency" his most important work, mainly because, over time, his research conclusions have been proven to be correct. He notes: **If a person lives long enough, the truth catches up to him.**

[Over the years, Earle has authored or coauthored 49 peer reviewed Journal articles, 35 Bulletins and Circulars, 1 textbook chapter, 71 Abstracts of papers presented at Scientific Meetings and 125 Field Day Reports and other papers. Earle holds many national honors for his scientific work and has served on many national boards and committees. He was elected as a Fellow in AAAS in 1949 and in ASAS in 1985. He was chosen for the Gamma Sigma Delta Merit Award in 1976 and the ASAS Animal Management Award in 1986.]

While in Africa, he found that the practice of communal grazing was a major problem for farmers. Herdsmen routinely over-grazed the land, resulting in their animals dying of starvation during the winter season. Earle designed a system to allow equitable use of the communal pastures. Ann volunteered for a school for the blind - teaching knitting to the students.

Earle and Ann are devoted and active members of the Wooster United Methodist Church. Between the two of them, I think they have served on virtually every volunteer board or commission in the church.

While in Lesotho, they attended an ecumenical English speaking church, which served 23 different protestant denominations in the area. The pastor was a Mennonite, Virgil Gehrig of Smithville (whose wife Mary Kay is Arden Ramseyer's sister). How's that for a small world.

Besides Rotary, Earle has also been very active in the community, serving on the local YMCA Board of Directors, and as a volunteer at the Wooster Community Hospital.

When Earle was Pack Master for Cub Scout Pack 62, Rotarian Bill Ross was a Cub Scout and his dad Ford played the piano at the pack meetings.

Earle swims everyday at the YMCA; he is a wood carver specializing in Marquetry, which is making pictures using wood veneers; and he and e have traveled extensively.

They have established a Student Assistance Program at South Dakota State University to help students who want to work with livestock and need financial assistance.

Earle is an outstanding scientist who has devoted his life to the improvement of agricultural practices. His success is, in part, the result of a state university that offered him an education. His work demonstrates the genius of the agricultural extension system that gives farmers the benefit of techniques learned through agricultural research.

But more than these things, Earle and Ann show us how determined people can overcome hardship to complete their education, achieve success in their chosen fields and continually give back to their community in the process.