Kling LeRoy Anderson: Rangeland Management Pioneer

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A visit to the Kansas Flint Hills is not complete without an introduction to Kling Anderson. Dr. Anderson spent his entire research career working on fire, grazing systems, and revegetation in the Hills. His teaching chores produced many of the profession's current stars. Above all, with his sense of humor, his dignity and poise, and his competent, incisive research, Kling made range management in Kansas, indeed the world, a better profession. Today's current hot topics—range condition, range site concepts, CRP revegetation, prescribed fire—all were a part of his forward thinking program. Let's meet the "man"!

Dr. Anderson assumed leadership of the Pasture Management program in the Department of Agronomy in 1938 and remained on the faculty at Kansas State University over the next 29 years, interrupted by two years absence to complete the requirements for his PhD at the University of Nebraska and as a Fulbright Fellow to New Zealand. He provided research that was extremely important to the ranching industry, not only in Kansas, but worldwide. His pioneering research on fire effects in grasslands served as a model for later research by many hundreds of researchers. A substantial impact of his fire research was adding dollars to the ranchers pocket through increased livestock performance. In concert with Soil Conservation Service personnel, Kling developed the vegetation-soil relationship concept and published a landmark paper in 1955 that is still the basis for range site classification by governmental agencies throughout the nation.

His impact was never more evident than recently, when grass varieties he developed (Kaw big bluestem, Osage indiangrass, Aldous little bluestem, and others) were used extensively in the Federal Conservation Reserve Program. The basic recommendations for sowing those grasses were also contributed by Anderson. His early research on stocking rate effects also was the springboard for later research by others that resulted in more efficient grazing systems for grasslands in the Great Plains.

Few researchers have had such a lasting impact on the range management profession. That impact was imparted through more than 60 technical publications and 100+ popular articles concerning efficient use of rangelands. In recognition for his outstanding professional achievements and the many ways in which he rendered service to the society, Anderson served on the Board of Directors and was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy. He was a charter member of the Society for Range Management, the 1972 recipient of the SRM Outstanding Achievement Award, and served as the president of the Kansas-Oklahoma section of that society. He also was selected as an Honorary member of the Soil Conservation Society of America. Further testament to his outstanding contributions was the American Grassland Council Merit Certificate for recognition of outstanding service to grassland agriculture. He also held memberships in the Ecological Society of America, Kansas Academy of Science, the Grassland Research Foundation, and the New Zealand Grassland Association.

Perhaps, Dr. Anderson's greatest impact came when he served as a revered and friendly advisor to many undergraduate and graduate students. He was major advisor for 7 PhD and 22 MS students. Those students have gone on to distinguish themselves in the range profession. The excellence of his graduate studies effort was attested to by election by his peers as the first recipient of a Faculty Lectureship at Kansas State and his receiving the Gamma Sigma Delta Distinguished Service Award. He was elected to numerous honor societies, including Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, Alpha Zeta, and Gamma Sigma Delta. The Kling L. Anderson Lectureship has been established in his honor to bring the movers and shakers in the range profession to Kansas State University to share their research with faculty and students.

Dr. Anderson had exemplary moral fiber and ideals. The term gentleman fit him well. When dealing with scientific or personal integrity, there were no compromises. His impact on the lives of those who were fortunate enough to have known him was profound and lasting.

There, you've met the man. Now you can understand why we in Kansas are so proud to have had Kling Anderson as a part of our history. He truly made Kansas a better place as a result of his presence.

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