



2016 Outstanding Achievement Award recipient Dr. Barron Rector and TSSRM President Willy Conrad

Texas Section Society for Rangeland Management Outstanding Achievement Award

Dr. Barron Rector

As the driving force behind the Youth Range Workshop for over 3 decades, the impact that Dr. Barron Rector has had on the youth of Texas, and the rangelands of our state cannot be measured. This camp is an intensive week-long, hands-on course in rangeland ecology and management for high school students. It has been held since 1955, and is the longest running camp of its kind. For more than half of those 62 years, Barron has been riding point. He assumed the role of coordinator from Dr. Bobby Joe Ragsdale in 1981, and has led the way ever since.

All directors and staff at the camp are volunteers, who are professionals in rangeland management. Barron incorporates extension range specialists, ranchers, federal and state agency personnel, private consultants, and university professors into the program, in order to educate the youth about the ever-changing rangeland resource and the challenges that today's land managers face.

The students are just as diverse as the directors and staff. Over 1900 young people have come from all over the state to attend range camp. They return home with a better understanding of our natural resources, and our responsibility to conserve them.

Under Barron's leadership, campers learn everything from how to conduct a forage inventory and calculate a proper stocking rate, to how to make a bed and mop a floor. Days begin early and end late, with the morning cabin inspection at 6:30 AM and the last classroom session well after 10 PM. No matter the time of day, Barron is always ready with a story to motivate the group, or a joke to send the whole camp into a fit of laughter.

At recreation time, you will find Barron on the pitcher's mound for a game of softball. He is a fierce competitor; if you are chosen to be on his team, you had better bring your "A" game! The same can be said on the volleyball court- Barron's serve is wicked!

Barron focuses not only on technical knowledge, but also life lessons such as leadership, problem solving, and communication skills. He inspires both the campers and staff to achieve more than they dreamed possible in a week's time, and to help others along the trail. This is the true meaning of leadership.

In addition to the wise use of natural resources, the goal of the workshop is to prepare youth to be leaders in their communities. Range campers have gone on to become ranchers, extension range specialists, and NRCS conservationists, but also mayors and county judges. Even State Representative Andrew Murr was a range camper!

Each February, Barron packs his bags, and sets out act as mentor and chaperone for the Youth Range Workshop delegates chosen to represent Texas at the national SRM High School Youth Forum, assisting them with their presentations for the technical paper competition. He serves as SRM High School Youth Forum Co-chair, coordinating the 3 1/2 day program held in conjunction with the SRM Annual Meeting.

As stated in the beginning, it is not possible to count the number of lives that Barron has touched over the years with his energy, enthusiasm, and gift for public speaking- not only at Youth Range Workshop, or at High School Youth Forum, but also through countless adult education activities, field days, and workshops held throughout the state.

Thank you Dr. Rector, for your dedication, your service, and your Outstanding Achievement in Rangeland Management.