

2017

In Memorium

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Recommended Citation

(2017) "In Memorium," *National Quail Symposium Proceedings*: Vol. 8 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/nqsp/vol8/iss1/9>

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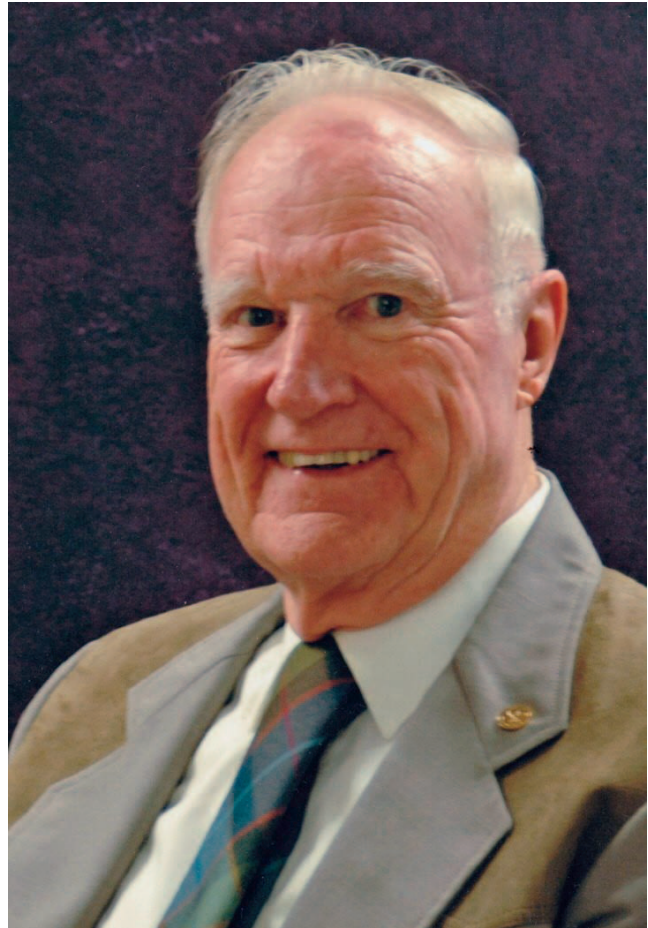
IN MEMORIUM

ROBERT “BOB” J. ROBEL 1933–2013

Robert J. Robel was born in 1933 in Lansing, Michigan. He was accepted into medical school at Michigan State University when he was a senior in high school. He changed his major from pre-medicine to wildlife ecology his junior year because he did not want to be stuck in an office. He put himself through college with a taxidermy business he purchased as a sophomore in high school. During his undergraduate career, he sought out advisors and secured funding at the University of Idaho and Utah State University where he received his master's and doctoral degrees.

He was hired as an assistant professor at Kansas State University's Department of Zoology in 1961. He traveled to the United Kingdom to study black grouse in 1967 on a Fulbright Scholarship. Much of Robel's research in Kansas was devoted to upland game birds, specifically prairie chickens and northern bobwhites. His research greatly increased our understanding of their behavior, habitat needs, and management. He also helped establish the Kansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Kansas State University. In his 50 years as a faculty member in the Division of Biology, he mentored hundreds of students who have gone on to successful careers in the wildlife field. His body of work involved habitat use, food habits, bioenergetics, and effects of herbicides. Results of his and his students' research have resulted in over 250 peer-reviewed publications. His research examining visual obstruction measurements and the weight of grassland vegetation gave scientists a quicker, easier way to evaluate vegetation density important for understanding relationships of grassland birds and their habitats with what is now known as the “Robel Pole Method.” Dr. Robel was a consultant and science advisor for several Kansas governors, energy companies, and served on many committees and task forces. He was also on a federal advisory committee for the Department of the Interior concerning wind power and wind farms.

Bob began competitive shooting while still in high school, and holds numerous regional and state championship titles in skeet and rifle shooting from Michigan, Idaho, and the Midwest. He served as the U.S. Olympic shooting team chairman, served on the Board of Directors for the National Rifle Foundation for 25 years, and was very active with the Kansas State Rifle Association. He received many awards throughout his career, including



the Centennial Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Idaho, and was inducted into their Alumni Hall of Fame in 1997. In 2001, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the College of Natural Resources Alumni Association at Utah State University. He received the Governor's Conservationist of the Year Award, the Proud Kansan Award from the Outdoor Writers Association, and the Outstanding Professional Award from the Kansas Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

—James Pitman, Conservation Services Director, Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and former student of Bob Robel