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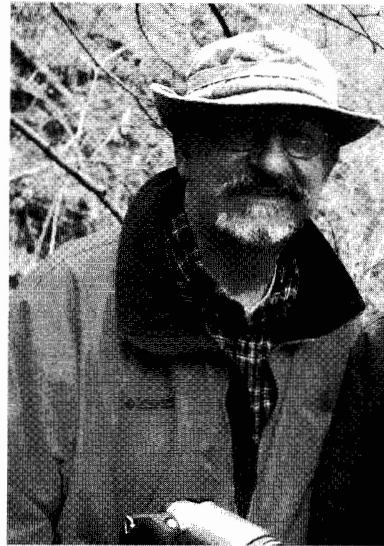
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In Memory of Roland E. Barth

by Neal Ratzlaff

On September 21, 2015, the NOU and the conservation community lost a good friend with the passing of Roland Barth. Barth served 30 years as a meteorologist in the US Air Force, achieving the rank of Colonel. Tours of duty included 5 states and Europe. He was also a Vietnam veteran and was awarded the Bronze Star and Legion of Merit. Other decorations include two Defense Meritorious Service Medals and the Air Force Commendation Medal.



Retirement allowed Roland to pursue his interest in nature and use his considerable leadership and organizational skills for the benefit of a number of conservation groups. He was a member of the NOU for over 20 years and served a term as a Director from 2008-11. This was a time when the need arose for the NOU to redo its web site and Roland quietly stepped in to guide the effort, which produced a very functional site and skilled web manager to implement it.

The Audubon Society of Omaha was also a beneficiary of his leadership skills. As finance chair in the early 1990's when ASO was the recipient of a sizable bequest, he instituted a plan which included professional management, thereby providing a stable source of funds for the organization. He also served ASO as its president from 1992-94.

Roland enjoyed walking and could reliably be found on the trails at Fontenelle Forest carrying his binoculars and, most notably, his camera. In response to questions about plant identification from visitors, Roland began photographing plants and placing photographs in a reference notebook on the admissions desk at the Forest. Roland's fertile mind was always brimming with ideas, one of those being how nice it would be to have a book that would include all the plants in it. So when funds became available he and a friend with a long-time interest in plants, whom Roland had already recruited for work on the notebook, co-authored two field guides: *Wildflowers of Fontenelle Forest and Neale Woods* (2003) and *Trees, Shrubs, Woody Vines, Grasses, Sedges and Rushes of Fontenelle Forest and Neale Woods* (2007). But Roland wasn't done. During the production of the book, the 'digital revolution' progressed to mobile devices, and a new vision surfaced, one that involved images and descriptions not just of plants, but of ALL species and could be accessed via the internet. More friends who possessed cameras and an interest in natural history were recruited, first for suggestions which went into a website which he designed for Fontenelle Forest and later for photos and descriptions of plants and animals occurring within the boundaries of Fontenelle Forest and Neale Woods. The site, fnanaturesearch.org, now contains over 2000 individual species accounts, each with one to several accompanying photos.

Retirement provided time for travel which included extended trips worldwide with his spouse, Ingrid, and numerous "grandparent" trips to visit his son and daughter and their families. There were birding trips to Texas, Arizona and the Nebraska Sandhills with three other retired friends who bore the self-designated title "good old boys". Another significant post-retirement pursuit was genealogy, and his legacy includes a meticulously researched and detailed family history he produced for his children.

Roland attended the New Jersey Institute of Technology graduating with a bachelor of science degree. Later he obtained a master of science degree from the University of Utah. At NJIT, he was a four year starter on the soccer team which, in 1959, reached the NAIA national tournament for the first time in school history. Following his senior season he was a second team All American selection and was invited to try out for the Pan-American games US national team. He was also a silver medalist on a fencing team which won the conference tournament title. In 2009 Roland was inducted into the NJIT Athletics Hall of Fame for his achievements in soccer and fencing.

Roland is survived by Ingrid, his wife of 53 years, son, daughter and grandchildren. Inurnment was at Arlington National Cemetery