

A TRIBUTE TO BRIAN LOUW

16 November 1946 to 10 September 1976

From your colleagues in the agricultural world

Brian, you were a very special, unique person. One of a kind. Someone we loved dearly. A man amongst men and women.

You set an example for us that will be difficult to follow. But it is a target for us to achieve.

Of all the leadership types there are, yours was the hardest, but the best.

You never had to be arrogant nor loud. You were yourself and we loyally followed you. You led us into being good scientists, but above all into being caring for our fellow man and to laugh often.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for giving us part of your life. For sharing it with us.

Goodbye dear friend

Alistair Paterson

Brian Louw matriculated from Paul Roos Gymnasium in Stellenbosch. Brian graduated with a B Sc from the University of Stellenbosch, a M Sc and Ph D from the University of Natal. Brian specialised in reproductive physiology and beef production on pastures.

Brian joined the Department of Agriculture in 1971 at Cedara where he worked until he retired due to ill health in July 2004, progressing from research scientist to Director of Technology Development and Training. In his capacity as Director, Brian led the research programme in KwaZulu-Natal and the two Agricultural Colleges.

Brian loved sport, especially rugby, coaching and managing the Cedara rugby team for most of his career at Cedara. Brian was also an avid squash player.

We will always remember Brian for the superb example he was to us during his fight with cancer. He was positive to the end.

Brian was a faithful member of the Natal Branch of SASAS. He served for many years as secretary for the branch, involved with the organisation of both Wild Coast congresses and numerous other branch activities.

Our sincerest condolences to Anna, Brians loving wife, and children, Jo, Marelize and Nanette.

Letters to The Editor

Dear Graham,

With great pleasure does retired Geof read his 'Grassroots', keep in touch with both current veld thought & the presence of Friends of Long Standing [note, not 'friends, despite the passage of time].

Being still a small-scale land manager [of a mere 4 500 ha & 26 acres], burning of the veld is part of my management program, a technique extending back to my initial trainee days beginning in [now] Zambia in 1957. A local fire-bug of the ilk of my distant friend Prof Winston though not of his academic eminence.

My 'burning question' arises from Winston's first article on fire as a natural factor in our African grasslands & savannas. "To Burn, or not to Burn, in light of Global Warming?" If an answer is not planned for the next two issues, perhaps Pf. Wtn would consider it for the one beyond!

For background covering my own experience, International Forest Fire News mid-late 1993 or 94 published my views within this part of our world including, I think, current incidence of lightning. Having been counting 'L' strikes anecdotally for around 30 years, recording briefly while our local 'L-counter' functioned & contemplating national Met records from the start of "T"-hunder Days, I can endorse Winston's comment that people-fires [in the jargon, anthropomorphic] are more important than natural - lightning.

I look forward to the next installment\s, & shall, if appropriate, comment accordingly. Politics & population expansion contribute towards the 'people factor' - burn the veld & drive the 'ranchers' out; clearing for land reallocation to 'politically' please the 'masses'; cultural repulsion of snakes & other

'predators' all contribute to excessive burning & contribute to global warming.

Should the conscientious land manager continue to do likewise, or have we an alternative strategy to maintain our veld in sustainable ranching condition?

When less distracted by daily events than at present, I hope to be able to summarize my 'lightning thoughts' for the newsletter, but don't bank on it! [My forest fire tower staff of the early 80ies refused to believe my assurances that their towers were Faraday Cages & therefore they were perfectly safe recording 'L'-strikes during early season T-storms, & the nearest tower was too far away for me to do it personally, so records are patchy.] [Also, tabulating 'my' new 'L'counter during local storms at Matopos circa '90-'93 nearly led to a divorce, - - - - -, no further comment].

Best wishes,
Geof

Hi,

Thank you very much for the recently-received copy of Grass Roots, which I am greatly enjoying; especially the reports and photographs from Congress. Sorry to read of the death of Gerald Hyam - truly one of nature's gentlemen. Delighted that GSSA is such a fore-runner in that it is likely to have three ladies in succession as President.

I was going to request that you include e-mail addresses of authors, but I see that Nicky Findlay (of whom I wished to ask a question) is Society PRO and so her address is shown there.

All good wishes and more strength to your elbows,
John Clatworthy