

In Remembrance:

Mitzi Fox

(April 5, 1934 - July 28, 2013)



Mitzi Fox, from Albion, Nebraska, served on the Prairie Plains Board of Directors for twelve years, from 1997 through 2008. We will always remember her as a most unusual person in every good sense of the word. Since 1993, when we first became acquainted with the Boone County/Olson Nature Preserve (ONP) group - including Mitzi, Norm and Donna Smith, Mitch Osborn, Ted and Mona Thieman, Quentin Mortensen and many others - until her recent passing, Mitzi was a strong supporter of Prairie Plains. As a local early proponent of ONP she helped lead the way for its establishment as a place for education and public enjoyment. She served on the development committee since it was established in the mid 1990s, and led many groups on hikes around the preserve through the years, pointing out plants and wildlife and recounting the stories of how the preserve came to be. She would do this any time of the year and in about any weather because she loved the place so much. Mitzi also enjoyed the various people of all ages who visited ONP and pointed out with enthusiasm everything the preserve had to offer. She even suited up and helped with the first prescribed burn on the lowland prairie in 1998.

Mitzi grew up in Shelby, Iowa, and was a graduate of the Commercial Extension School of Business in Omaha. She and her late husband, L. J. "Jim" Fox were the parents of four sons and a daughter, all raised in Albion. Mitzi was very devoted to her family, church and the community. She had many friends, enjoyed travel (especially bird-watching road trips, being an active member of the Nebraska Ornithologist's Union), good music, good food and good coffee. She loved to read and learn and question – truly a world citizen. Mitzi passed away at the Wolf Memorial Good Samaritan Center in Albion. She will be greatly missed.



Whatever the weather, whatever the time of day, Mitzi was always eager to lead the way on the trails of ONP. Above, a Wildflower Week hike; below, the annual October Enchanted Trail event.



Mitzi was the recipient of the Charles L. Whitney Outstanding Service to PPRI Award at the Annual Meeting of Members, January 17, 2009 in Aurora. The award was presented by retiring board member (and bird-watching companion) Colleen Babcock, who spoke of Mitzi's tireless dedication to ONP and her enthusiastic support and advocacy of Prairie Plains during her twelve years of service on the Board.



Prairie Plains is hosting a Mitzi Fox Memorial event at ONP on Saturday, September 21st at 2:00 p.m.

In Remembrance:

Dr. Louis “Lou” Gilbert

(March 16, 1919 - June 29, 2013)



It was the early 1980s when Prairie Plains co-founder and board member, Curt Twedt, introduced us to Lou and Geri Gilbert. The meeting took place at their restored farmhouse located on an acreage along the south side of the Platte River just north of Cedar Bluffs, west of Fremont. The place included a prominent bluff formation known as Pahuk, a most sacred site of the Pawnee Indian Nation. When we met Lou and Geri, they had recently donated a historic conservation easement with the Nebraska State Historical Society - still in effect through the change in ownership. Pahuk is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

On the day we met, the Gilberts treated us to a rigorous hike, where we experienced the up-and-down topography and beautiful oak woodland of Pahuk, stopping frequently to peer out from the shady canopy and view the broad eastern Platte Valley. We learned that the hiking trails were designed by Emiel Christensen* of Columbus. Lou greatly appreciated Emiel's ideas about landscape design and people's roles in working with nature. He showed great interest and enthusiasm about the land - its flora, wildlife and Pawnee history - and was eager to share it with others, always listening to what they could add to his understanding.

Lou was born and raised in Beatrice, Nebraska. In 2006, he donated the land that was the original homestead of his maternal grandparents to the City of Beatrice. The land is now a beautiful city park and an affiliate of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum.

As a medical doctor, Lou served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps from 1944 to 1946, and practiced general medicine in Hot Springs, South Dakota prior to his three-year fellowship in urology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. In 1952, he began a urology practice in Lincoln, and was co-founder of Urology, P.C. He retired in 1993.

Lou spent his very active retirement years with Geri in La Posada in Green Valley, Arizona. He believed in lifelong learning - continuing to walk nature trails, take classes, travel and spend time with family, including two sons and two grandchildren. The Gilberts celebrated their 70th anniversary in March with a trip to California.

Lou Gilbert was an avid Prairie Plains supporter, and served on its Board of Directors from 1991 through 1995. It was Lou and Geri Gilbert that connected us to an architect named Lee Schriever, who they hired to design and build their Prairie House, a meeting place at their Pahuk home. Years later, Lee would be commissioned to work as the architect for the Charles L. Whitney Education Center.

We will always remember Lou for his kindness, enthusiasm and generosity.

*See "PaWiTo" by Bill Lock, in *Prairie Plains Journal* No. 5, Summer 1983 - under publications on the website prairieplains.org.