

Dr. Robert F. Powers



Dr. Robert F. Powers passed away November 1st, in Redding, California. He was born in Los Angeles, October 1st, 1939 to James and Grace Powers. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Quin and his mother and step-father, Grace and Francis Murphy. He is survived by his wife, of 52 years, Ann. A memorial is being planned.

Robert F. Powers (Bob) had a long distinguished career with the United States Forest Service. After graduating from the first graduating class at Enterprise High School in Redding, California, he began his higher education at Humboldt State College where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in forestry in 1966. He began his illustrious career with the US Forest Service at Redding Silviculture Laboratory (a research unit of the Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, US Forest Service). During his early years with the Silviculture Laboratory, Bob entered the post graduate phase of his education and attended the University of California in Berkeley. It was there that he earned his Ph.D. degree with a focus on physiological forest ecology in 1981.

He was very active in initiating many long-term field studies during career. These studies have helped to provide the scientific basis for forest management practices throughout California and the western United States. He was particularly proud of his leadership and efforts to establish the National Long-term Site Productivity research effort in 1986. This cutting edge national research effort has resulted in the installation of the research design on over 70 sites all focused on maintaining and enhancing forest site productivity in the United States. Research results are already provided some key insights on forest soil productivity and will continue to provide scientific and management data for the next 100 years.

He eventually progressed to Senior Scientist and Team Leader of the Redding Silviculture Laboratory in 2000. He retired in 2008 following 40 years of research on silvicultural and soil-site research with approximately 150 publications. He was awarded an Emeritus Research Forester designation at the Pacific Southwest Research Station, USDA Forest Service after his retirement.

Dr. Powers was an excellent speaker and sought after at many forestry and soils conference in California, the United States and throughout the world. He traveled to many countries including Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Chile and China. He also was the one of co-founders of the California Forest Soils Council in 1981. He was an active supporter and frequent speaker and contributor to the organization and efforts of California Forest Vegetation Management Conference for the past 37 years.

He was an Affiliate Professor at the Oregon State University and a Co-director of the Sierra-Cascade Intensive Forest Management Research Cooperative. Additionally, he was a Visiting Scientist at the NZ Forest Research Institution in 1989; a Visiting Scientist at the CSIRO, Australia, in 1988. He has served as an editor for the Forest Ecology and Management (1992-present) and for the Soil Science Society of America Journal (1981-1987). Moreover, he was appointed as a Fellow at the Soil Science Society of America in 1994. He was granted the National Silviculture Award by the US Forest Service in 1997; National Land Stewardship Award in 1990; S.A. Wilde Distinguished Lecturer in 2007; Starker Distinguished Lectureship in 2007; L.W. Schatz Inaugural Lecturer in 2004. He was honored as a Distinguished Alumni from Humboldt State University in 2010.

In addition to all of his professional accomplishments, Bob was an avid fly fisherman and was quoted as once saying, "I was a fly fisherman long before Norman Maclean's A River Runs through It." He loved to fish many of the famous fly fishing locations whenever his travels throughout the United States and the world would permit. He was also an avid supporter of the San Francisco 49ers and a virtual encyclopedia of professional baseball focused on the period his formative years. He will be missed by many and his research legacy will continue. Bob had a soft side and he will be especially missed by the feline population of Dunsuir. His concern for the down trodden is reflected in his care for feral cats that wandered into his home at Dunsuir, California. Every cat in the neighborhood found food and shelter there.

He will be greatly missed.