

Vance Anderson

2009 Maurice Kremer Groundwater Achievement Award Winner



**VANCE ANDERSON WITH
GROUNDWATER FOUNDATION
PRESIDENT JANE GRIFFIN**

With a life dedicated to prudent irrigation development in Nebraska, Vance Anderson of Hastings was selected to receive The Groundwater Foundation's 2009 Maurice Kremer Groundwater Achievement Award. The 99-year-old Nebraskan was honored at a private event in late July 2009.

The Kremer Award was established in 1985 to recognize Nebraskans who have made a substantive contribution to the conservation and protection of Nebraska's groundwater.

"He has always been a kindred spirit, enthralled and always curious about the wondrous nature of Nebraska's water resources," said Jim Goeke, who is a research hydro geologist with the University of Nebraska Conservation and Survey

Division and a member of the selection committee. "I can't imagine anyone more deserving of this award."

Vance's grandfather, Mads, began farming near the confluence of the North and South Loup rivers in 1895, according to an article about the family in the book, *Flat Water: A History of Nebraska and Its Water*. So his family has always been intertwined with Nebraska's water resources as they struggled to ingeniously irrigate their fields. In 1908, Mads invented and patented the land roller to help prepare better seed beds. Then in 1911, he moved his family to Hastings to start the Western Land Roller Company (WLR). The company made hay stackers, sweeps and then eventually 6-inch centrifugal pumps and deep well turbine pumps.

At the young age of 15, Vance helped an uncle irrigate in Oregon and then a year later was sent to the family farm to help the tenant with this new "irrigation" and the use of their newly installed centrifugal pump. Their elaborate system pumped 2,200 gallons per minute from the North Loup River. Vance pitched a tent by the river to look after the pumps during the irrigation season. In 1944, the North Loup flooded and shifted its course, prompting Vance to prospect for a groundwater source. He finally located a 174-foot well that pumped 1,000 gallons per minute and is still a unique well today.

Vance headed up pump sales for WLR from 1940 until he retired in 1979. He is a past secretary of the Nebraska Water Resources Association and a former chairman of the public advisory board to the Nebraska Department of Water Resources. He is an honorary life member of the Nebraska Well Drillers Association (NWDA) and served 25 years on the NWDA board of directors. He is also a past board member of the State Irrigation Association, was the first chairman of the Nebraska Water Conference Committee and was a board member for the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District.

Vance passed away in September 2010 at the age of 100.

The Kremer Award is chosen by a selection committee appointed by The Groundwater Foundation Board of Directors. 2009 selection committee members include: Goeke; Jane Griffin, President of The Groundwater Foundation; Don Kraus, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District; Bob Kuzelka, University of Nebraska Environmental Studies and Susan Seacrest, Founder and Former President of The Groundwater Foundation.