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Obituary: Kimball Taylor Harper, 1931–2011

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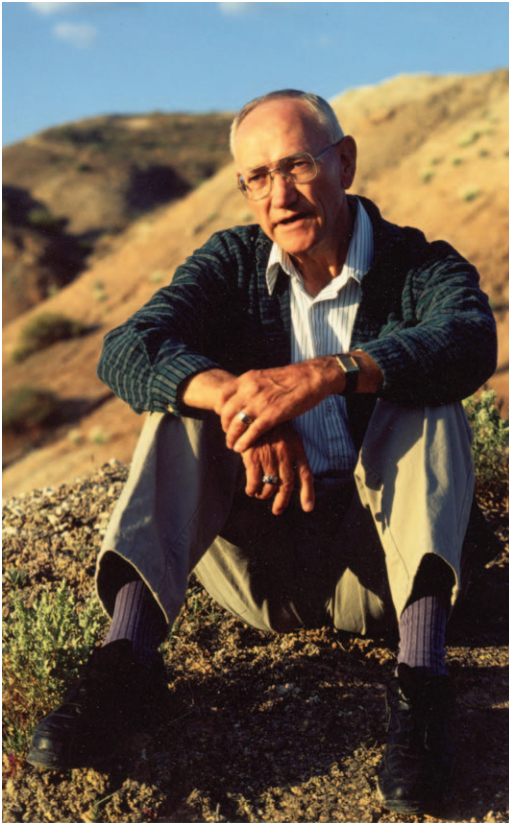
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OBITUARY: KIMBALL TAYLOR HARPER, 1931–2011



Kimball T. Harper

Kimball Taylor Harper, 80, passed away on Sunday, 2 October 2011, in Spanish Fork, Utah. He was an exceptional scientist, teacher, and mentor, and a friend to many. Kim contributed much to our understanding of plants and their place in the landscapes of the Intermountain West. His influence on hundreds of students is evidenced by so many who have chosen careers in plant science, range management, plant ecology, plant conservation, and plant taxonomy and who are now making contributions across the country.

Kimball Harper was born in Oakley, Idaho, in 1931. After attending public schools there,

he served a 2-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS). Thereafter, he was drafted by the U.S. Army and served for 2 years in Korea. Upon completing his tour of duty, he studied agronomy at Brigham Young University (BYU), finishing his baccalaureate degree in 1958. That same year he married Caroline Frances Stepp. Kim continued his studies at BYU and completed an M.S. degree in Range Management and Plant ecology in 1960. He then traveled with his family to Madison, Wisconsin, where he took a Ph.D. in Botany with Grant Cottam at the University of Wisconsin in 1963.

Dr. Harper's academic career began at the University of Utah where he taught botany classes from 1963 to 1973. While there, he was befriended and greatly influenced by Walter Cottam. In 1973 he accepted a position as chair of the Department of Botany and Range Science at BYU. He continued as a faculty member at BYU until 1996.

After serving an 18-month LDS mission with Caroline, Kim became "Botany Scholar in Residence" at Utah Valley University (UVU), where he made significant contributions to the university's herbarium, tutored many students, and mentored many faculty members. His legacy continues at UVU through a generous endowment for students of botany and a lecture hall bearing his name in university's new, as-yet-unnamed science building.

Harper was a 4-time recipient of the student-selected "Outstanding Teacher" award (1986, 1987, 1989, and 1994) at BYU. In addition, he was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and he received the President's Public Service Award from The Nature Conservancy in 1987. BYU recognized Harper's accomplishments in various ways, such as with Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Faculty awards in 1980 and 1993 and the College Professorship Award of the College of Biology and Agriculture in 1993.

Harper served the Ecological Society of America as a member of the Cooper Award

Committee (1987–1988) and as a 2-term member of the editorial board for *Ecology* and *Ecological Monographs* (1965–1967 and 1975–1979). He was chair of the Merit Awards Committee of the Botanical Society of America from 1980 to 1982 and a member of the National Academy of Science, Mono Lake Ecosystem Study Committee, from 1985 to 1987.

Of special note to this publication is that Dr. Harper served on the editorial board of the *Great Basin Naturalist* (predecessor to the *Western North American Naturalist*) from 1975 to 1980 and chaired the board from 1981 to 1990. He published 24 articles in the journal over a span of 29 years (1978–2006).

Kim Harper served as chair on the graduate committees of the following students (sincere apologies for any omissions at the time of this publication): Ron Bolander (1972), Dwight C. Freeman (1976), David C. Anderson (1978), John L. England (1979), Karl B. McNight (1980), R.D. Ramsey (1983), Rebecca D. Fields (1983), Patrick D. Collins (1983), Fred J. Wagstaff (1983), Deanna R. Nelson (1989), Jayne Belnap (1990), James R. Marble (1990), Valori A. Armstrong (1992), David Whittikend (1992), Loreen Allphin (1992), Robert L. Johnson (1993), Mark Farmer (1995), Ghanim Abbadi (1996), Steven Flinders (1996), Chris Stubben (1997), and Vicki T. Christensen (1997).

Anyone who had the great pleasure of Kim Harper's company enjoyed his wit, curiosity, integrity, and delightful personality. He touched our lives, and we are better because we rubbed shoulders with this gentle man.

Submitted by

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