

Bernard Sonntag - College 1962

Honorary Life Member 2014

Bernard was born in Goodsoil, Saskatchewan in 1940 and graduated from Goodsoil High School in 1958. He completed his BSA at the U of S in 1962. After graduation, Bernie was employed with Agriculture Canada, Economics Branch from 1962 - 1966. During this time he completed an MSc in Ag Economics at the U of S in 1965. He worked for a consulting firm in Ottawa in 1966-67. In 1968, with the support of Agriculture Canada, Bernie began PhD studies at Purdue University, Indiana, USA. Upon completion in 1971, he joined Agriculture Canada Research Centre in Lethbridge. Over the next several years the economics unit became an integral part of the Research Centre. In 1979, the Research Branch opened a western region office in Saskatoon. Bernie became the regional office's economist.

In 1980, Bernie was appointed Director of the Brandon Research Centre. Six years later, Bernie transferred to the AAFC research centre in Swift Current, where he also managed a CIDA land management project in Brazil. Bernie returned to Lethbridge as Director in 1989. He also managed a large CIDA project in China. Because of his successful leadership in this project, relationships between Hebei Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences and Canadian scientists continue to this day. Bernie concluded his career with Agriculture Canada as the Director-General of PFRA retiring in 2000.

Even though retired, Bernie continued his work with China. Bernie was, for several years, the co-chair of the Agriculture and Rural Development Task Force of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development. Bernie also was the International Advisor to the President of Inner Mongolia Agricultural University for several years.

Bernie was an active member of numerous professional and community organizations. He served as President of the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists. He is a Fellow of the Agricultural Institute of Canada. He was the recipient of the Bell Canada Leadership Award in 1993. He was awarded the Distinguished Agrologist Award by the Alberta Institute of Agrologists in 1995. He was the recipient of Agcellence awards in Agriculture Canada in 1993 and 1995. He served a term as President of SAGA and was editor of the SAGA newsletter for several years. Bernie joined the Rotary club in Brandon in the early 80's and has maintained his membership in that organization to the present day.

Bernie and Mary were married in 1963 and have three children Calvin, Galen & Courtney Anne. All are graduates of the U of S. They now have seven grandchildren.