

Life devoted to the land

John Allan Beare

Soil conservationist and civil servant

Born: March 13, 1916; Wallaroo

Died: January 3, 2007; Adelaide

DURING his career, Allan Beare gave his all to the South Australian rural community without seeking personal recognition. Allan was born in 1916, the second of three children. His parents Albert and Winifred ran a wheat farm at Nantawarra, in the state's Mid North. The close association with the land and farming in his early years remained with Allan throughout his life.

Allan excelled at school at Kadina and Adelaide Boys High School, winning a university bursary. In 1934, he studied agricultural science at Adelaide University and graduated from Roseworthy College in 1937. He joined the Department of Agriculture in 1938, starting a 38-year career.

In 1945, Allan switched from horticulture to soils. As assistant soils conservator between 1945 and 1951 he advised farmers on ways to control soil erosion, establishing techniques for the contour planting of vineyards and orchards.

For the next four years, Allan was the senior soil conservation research officer, developing the Wanbi Research Centre



and starting soil stabilisation studies and revegetation of the northern marginal lands.

In 1955, Allan was appointed soil conservator and chief soils officer and head of the Soil Conservation Branch, a position he held for 21 years until his retirement in 1976.

Towards the end of his career, Allan sought ways to share SA's dry-land farming expertise with less-developed countries. After retiring, he undertook two assignments in Iran for the United Nations. Unfortunately the project ended with the demise of the Shah's regime.

Allan served on many state committees, including the Standing Committee on Soil Conservation, the Underground Waters Advisory Committee and the South-East Water Resources Investigation Committee. He was the agricultural representative on the technical committee on water quality of the Australian Water Resources Council and a foundation member of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science.

Allan bought a property at Bull Creek in 1971. Sadly, the hard work and effort he put into developing it was destroyed in the Ash Wednesday bushfire of 1983.

Allan married Betty Goss in 1941. They raised three children on an intensively-farmed, quarter-acre block in Glenunga.

Allan is remembered for his flaming red hair and upright stance, his generosity, and occasionally irascible, but fundamentally gentle nature.

He is survived by three children, seven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and sister.

John Beare and Bill Stacy