



## Late legislator continues to give back to state

When the late David Little, an eight-term Idaho legislator, served on the powerful Joint Financial Affairs Committee, he saw the need for both state and private support for scientific research. Little, the only rancher to lead both the Idaho Cattle and Idaho Woolgrowers Associations, knew science could help to answer society's questions about natural resource management.

He also knew that federal and state support could not provide all of the resources necessary. In his customary fashion, he founded the David Little Livestock Range Management Research Endowment at the University of Idaho to begin to address that issue. Created in 1981, the endowment provided \$60,000 for range-related research and education in 2002. For Karen Launchbaugh, a range scientist in the UI College of Natural Resources, the funding from the endowment fills a critical role.

Launchbaugh, weed scientist Linda Wilson of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and UI Extension educator Shannon Williams received a \$20,000 grant from the Little Endowment to begin a study of using livestock grazing to manage rangeland weeds in Idaho. Their study will focus on three weeds, meadow hawkweed, sulfur cinquefoil and houndstongue, in northern Idaho and two, Dalmatian toadflax and whitetop, in southern Idaho.

The Little Endowment also funded a previous study by Launchbaugh and Wilson on yellow starthistle. "Mostly what it's done has been to provide seed money to do the initial research needed to secure additional funding for more detailed research," Launchbaugh said.

That is what David Little wanted to accomplish, said Larry Branen, UI dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. "He knew there needed to be wider support for carrying out research targeted to the use of range in Idaho. This has been a program that has allowed us to

get into areas that we couldn't address before." In addition, Branen said, the Little Endowment has provided the chance for researchers to involve students in their work, adding, "The fact that we were able to include students and solve specific problems facing livestock producers is what I see is important."

In its most recent round of project funding, the Little Endowment advisory committee took a different tack that tied it more closely to educational efforts than ever before. The endowment's latest project provided \$13,635 to support helping schoolteachers incorporate range science into their lesson plans.

Launchbaugh will team with the Idaho Rangeland

Resource Commission's Gretchen Hyde to create a broader range education program. They believe Little Endowment funding will provide a bridge to build on past teacher education efforts and leverage them to win further support for the effort.



Photo courtesy of the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission

Late lawmaker David Little was both a cattle and sheep rancher with a deep interest in research and education.

In the starthistle study, the Little Endowment funding helped the team land another \$155,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Western Region Integrated Pest Management Program. She said, "It's really hard to get big grants these days without showing you can do the work."