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In Memory of Loren 'Bub' Blake

Sept. 17, 1944 - Oct. 5, 2004

by Neal Ratzlaff

Loren Blake, known to all of his friends as 'Bub', entered many of our lives on a fall evening in the late 1980s. The occasion was the traditional shared nature slide session at the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Fall Field Days. Rumors circulated about a Sandhills rancher interested in birds and photography who was going to show up with a few slides he had taken 'around the ranch'. And show up he did, with a carousel of his best! The room was soon buzzing with Oohs, Aahs, and Wows as Bub dazzled us with his crisp, well-composed photos of everything from sparrows to herons.

Over the years, the slides continued, with an ever-widening range of locations, all the way to Texas and Bosque del Apache, and our friendship with this soft-spoken, diminutive rancher grew. His photos began to appear elsewhere, including in *NEBRASKAland* magazine.



Photo courtesy of Joel Sartore/www.joelsartore.com

Members of the Audubon Society of Omaha will remember his presentation at one of our meetings, particularly the Burrowing Owl slides, which documented the sequential appearance of seven owls, one owl at a time, a series which perhaps best demonstrated his remarkable patience and passion for nature.

After he retired from the ranch, Bub was a regular springtime volunteer at Rowe Sanctuary, where he served as a tour guide and gave lectures and photo presentations on cranes. He also spent considerable time working and volunteering at the Ashfall Fossil Beds where he developed a very successful bluebird route.

Bub left us much the same way he came. Quietly, without fanfare or advance notice. But his photos and the words of St. Francis that accompanied his presentations remain with us:

"All things bright and beautiful. All creatures great and small. All things wise and wonderful. The Lord God made them all."

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