



## President's Address:

# Defining failures and successes

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*This address was given by David Fischbach, 1994 President of the Society for Range Management, on January 17, 1995, at the Society's Annual Meeting in Phoenix, Ariz.*

I'll never forget 3 years ago when the telephone rang one evening, early in December. It was Stan Tixier who called to inform me that I had been elected as your 2nd vice president. Stan and I visited for a little while. When we were finished, I hung up the phone and went to the living room where my wife was and explained to her that Stan Tixier had just called to congratulate me on being elected. Eldora was quilting that evening, as she frequently does. She didn't even look up and said "That was the dumbest thing you ever did in your life!"

We have a lot of challenges in front of us my friends. I would just like to pose some of these challenges to you, as I see them right now. They are not going to be specific. They are going to be quite general.

One of the challenges we are going to have is to renew our commitment as SRM members and as people who are dedicated not only to SRM but to the range resource. Some of you are really going to have a challenge with the cuts that we have seen recently in the United States government. Some of you have challenges in your work load and how you are going to perform your job. I would like to address specifically the challenges of what you are going to do from now on with, and for, the Society for Range Management. With funding cuts, many of you will have reductions in your travel accounts. I submit to you, this reduction in your travel accounts will bring out your dedication to the Society, to the goals of all range management. That is what dedication really is. Dedication frequently comes, and has to come from sacrifice. When you have to dig in to your own pocket to work for an organization or a cause, that's where dedication and sacrifice come in. I really look forward to all of you coming back to our future meetings, even though many of you might have to dig into your own pockets to come. I tell you very simply that we need all of you to continue to participate and support the Society and it's goals.

In our English language we have 2 words that we don't frequently think about today. Those 2 words are opposite words. One of them is failure; and one is success.

What is failure? What does it mean to fail? Failure quite simply is the lack of success. It doesn't have to be. We can learn much from our failures if we pay attention to them. Capitalize on what we have learned from our mistakes and turn these mistakes and

failures into successes. I offer these challenges to you as individuals as well as the Society for Range Management. Let's analyze our failures, see how we can capitalize on them and turn them into successes. Actually when you think about it, success wouldn't be very valuable if it weren't for an occasional failure. If everything we did and said was 100% successful, it really wouldn't have the value that it has when we compare it to our failures.

Let's look at success. What really is success. It is seen by most of us in very different ways. Some of us call it successful when we climb the professional ladder, when we accumulate wealth, or when we have hard goods. Maybe we need to look at it differently. My favorite definition of success is quite simply, **we are successful when we are perceived by our peers as we would have them perceive us.** Here again I address this to each of us as individuals and to all of us as a group of people who work with and for the profession of range management.

In this definition of success we have to analyze 2 or 3 things, and maybe ask ourselves some questions. Question number one might be, who are our peers? Question number two might be, how do they perceive us? Question three, whom would we have be our peers, and how do they perceive us. And from there, what are we going to do to have our peers perceive us as we would have them. My challenge to us is to capitalize on our failures and turn them into successes, to evaluate our successes and improve on them wherever we can, determine who we would have our peers be and do what we can to have them perceive us as we would have them. The best way for all of us to do this is to constantly, everyday, keep in mind that we must do and say the things that we know in our hearts are the right things to do. Maybe not politically correct, maybe not bureaucratically expedient, maybe not individually, personally beneficial to us as individuals, or as a group at this particular time. To look at where we are headed, and do and say the things that we know are right.

In order to do that, it is a further challenge of ours to be as informed as possible on **many** different fronts. There is nothing more frightening than ignorance in action. If we don't get the facts right, there is no way we can make the decisions right. When we criticize or disagree with people we must criticize or disagree from our hearts to an idea or an objective, not to an indi-

vidual or group. Criticize constructively from our hearts, to an idea, not destructively from our emotions to an individual.

Someone told me once I've never disagreed with a person who couldn't be my friend, if that person wanted to be. I've never lost a friend because we disagreed. When people deem themselves or are deemed by others to be leaders, it frequently behooves them to look over their shoulders and see who is following.

During this 3 year tenure as an officer in the Society for Range Management:

My eyes have been opened, to many different views  
and some have really seemed strange.  
Like the way so many people perceive this resource  
that we refer to as range.

It's been a fun trail, a valuable experience  
that's added a lot to my life.  
But I can go no further, without giving  
thanks to my parents, my son and my wife.

Without their support and continuous sacrifice,  
it would have been impossible for me to serve,  
as President of your SRM, for without them,  
I wouldn't have had the nerve.

So when the grass is parched and the waterholes  
are dry, and we look up for clouds to see only blue sky;  
We give thanks to those on earth and above;  
to all who have helped us, and blessed us with love.

Those back home have managed to get by,  
sometimes on just a lick and a promise.  
I guess I'll just head on back now,  
if I can only remember where home is.

The time has come to saddle up and  
ride the trail to camp.  
I can tell I haven't been here long,  
cause the saddle blanket's still damp.

So with the saddle in place and a foot in  
the stirrup, I put my hand on the horn;  
And swing back into a familiar saddle,  
Maybe feelin' kind of forlorn.

Now some places we've been it seems we've left  
without leaving much for evidence or traces;  
But I do remember a hotel in Spokane,  
where we had fun with some "Friends in Low Places"

That piano player was a super talent, and the  
microphone he certainly didn't hog;  
But after six nights, he still hadn't learned,  
"The Dirty Old Egg-Suckin' Dog".

As we grow older though, we continue to learn,  
but some things will just never change.  
I'm still the same guy, who enjoys a piano sing-along,  
and a few verses of "Home on the Range."