

# *Bob & Mary Wilson*

Robert and Mary met in college at Iowa State University. Bob was on the ISU wrestling team and was Big Eight Champion his sophomore year and won outstanding athlete award his freshman year. He had very few losses in his career. Robert got an agricultural degree and Mary a home economics degree focused on clothing and design.

After getting back from military service they purchased a small 80 acre farm and a few crossbred sheep. In 1958 they bought their first two Suffolk ewe lambs. They purchased their first Suffolk ram from Wes Azeltine. The farm was kind of a hobby farm and family affair with everyone chipping in. Their two sons, Mark and Scott, found the farm and work with the sheep an exciting adventure. The flock grew to be about 80-100 purebred ewes and several Suffolk rams as an average for most of the years that Mark and Scott were at home. They rented an extra 80 acres to provide for more hay ground and grain as the sheep project grew. Mary had a great deal of responsibilities with the sheep during the day as Robert had to go and teach school. Bob taught science for several years at Clear Lake School and 25 years at Monroe Junior High School in Mason City. Night checks and earlier morning checks were mostly done by Robert and Mary.

Robert and Mary were involved in many facets of the sheep industry. They were secretary of the Iowa Suffolk Sheep Association for 22 years. Mary was involved with the Make It Wool contests and promotional activities. They were involved in many of the Taste of Lamb promotions in county and state activities. They were heavily involved in showing sheep at the county fairs and a couple of the state fairs. Bob was involved in judging for about 25 years for state and county shows. He really enjoyed helping with 4-H training and working with sheep projects around the state. Mary and Bob were involved in the Iowa Ram Test with ISU extension agents and with their many friends of the Iowa Suffolk Sheep Association.

One of the family's highlights each year was showing at the Iowa State Fair. They still have strong connections with several families and friends that they met at the State Fair, even though they are 87 years old. Fun memories of cooking food at one of the pens in the sheep barn or in the sheep trailer after it was all cleaned up and made for a good place to sleep. Scott and Mark slept on the upper deck of the trailer.

Both Bob and Mary focused on body type, performance and amount of muscling in their sheep. They sold many purebred rams and ewes. They had some fun successes with Champion ewes at the Iowa State Fair, but the biggest thrill was champion ram and ewe together for the first time in 1968. The ram was named by Mary when it was born, Dynamo and was champion at every show that he was entered in 1968. Scott also took sheep to the Wisconsin State Fair and won both champion ewe and ram. The family did well at contests like the National Lamb Show where they had Champion lamb in 1971 and 1969 Champion at the Iowa State Fair Open Carcass Lamb show. Robert sold many lambs that won shows at county fairs and allowed young 4H contests to qualify lambs for the State Fair.

Robert and Mary placed a lot of value on the educational process of raising sheep, building character such as integrity, being humble and to always strive to do ones best. It was important to Bob and Mary that people recognized their belief in God and that they always strived to help any who was in need. Bob and Mark particularly want to thank Wayne and Mary Skartvedt for their nomination and assistance for this great honor. Many blessing to all those we have meet in our time in the Suffolk Sheep Association.