



FARMLAND INFORMATION CENTER

NORM BERG COLLECTION

WILL SHAFROTH

When I arrived in Washington, D.C., over Labor Day weekend in 1982 to come to the AFT headquarters office to get oriented for my new job as California Field Representative, I met this guy named Norm Berg who had been the Chief of the Soil Conservation Service. I was only 25 at the time so someone who was already retired from federal service seemed a bit old to me. Little did I know what a powerful, energetic and committed individual he was. Throughout my whole career since, more than 27 years, Norm has been a force. In my time at AFT, Norm was always there as a mentor on a whole host of issues. He and Ruth would come to California, and all of the people we encountered in the SCS revered him—and by extension I gained respect and credibility with key individuals in the various western states. Just dropping Norm's name got me meetings with people I would not have otherwise been able to get in to see.

It was the softer, human side of Norm that I really appreciated. What a consummate gentleman he always was. What a person of impeccable character. What a caring human being, always asking about Erica and the kids in a very authentic way.

I will surely miss Norm and his omnipresence on the issues of farmland protection and soil conservation, as well as his kindness and good nature.