

DEADWOOD WALL OF FAME

2010

Harry Stone Berger

Born: Aug. 29, 1894

Died: Aug. 17, 1980

During his 36 years as Superintendent of the Deadwood School District, Harry Stone Berger shaped countless lives and sent thousands of young people out into the real world with a solid head-start on life. Many students, after they graduated, realized belatedly what a positive impact he had on their young lives. Over the years he received numerous thank-you notes from former students.

Their Deadwood educations made it easier for them to get into colleges and universities, and the alumnae arrived on campus instilled with respect, compassion and a work ethic that served them well throughout their lives.

Berger was born Aug. 29, 1894, in Middletown, Missouri. He studied at the University of Northern Missouri, the University of Missouri, and the University of Colorado. He was a teacher and administrator in several Missouri school districts before arriving in Deadwood in 1928 to become the town's Superintendent of schools.

That same year, he married Lucille Walter. They had two children, son James Mark Berger and daughter Marilyn Jean Jordan.

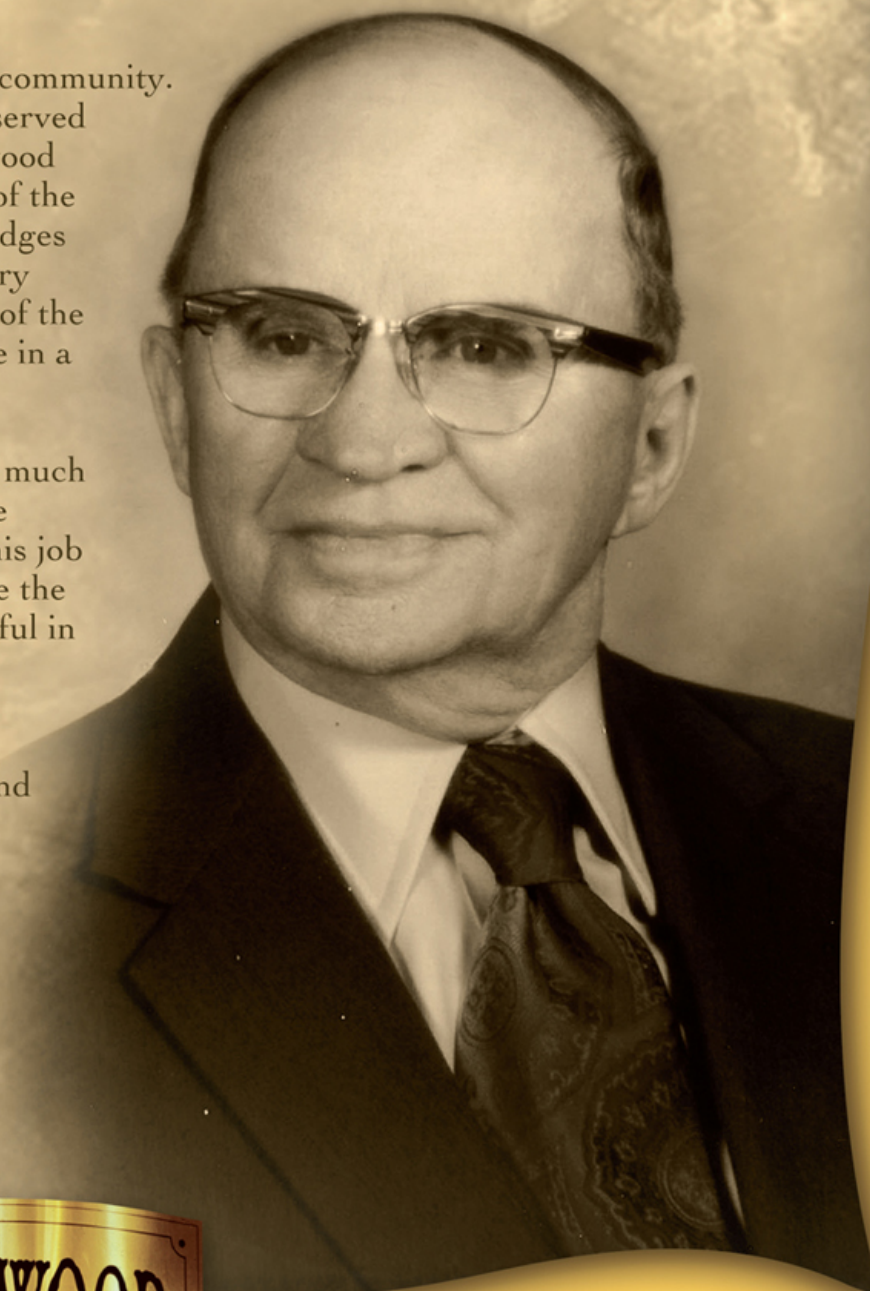
Under Mr. Berger's leadership, Deadwood Schools were rated among the top schools in South Dakota. He achieved this through careful selection of faculty – he traveled to universities in five states to personally interview teaching candidates – high academic standards and a sincere concern for each student made the Deadwood Schools stand out.

In addition, he served as a role model for the entire community. He was a 50-year member of the Rotary Club, and served a term as President. He also belonged to the Deadwood Chamber of Commerce, served as a board member of the United Methodist Church, was active in Masonic lodges and was a lifetime member of the Tomahawk Country Club. He served as the Western Division President of the South Dakota Education Association and was active in a number of professional organizations.

Those who knew him say that Mr. Berger's job was much more than a job. "Mr. Berger did not know what the term 'work day' meant," said one person. "To him, his job was his life, and he worked countless hours to create the quality learning environment that he was so successful in achieving."

Mr. Berger also worked behind the scenes to help Deadwood students and their families. He helped find jobs for out-of-work parents, provided Christmas surprises for children in need, left bags of groceries on doorsteps and figured out ways for needy students to get eyeglasses and dental care.

He loved animals, particularly his cocker spaniels Freckles and Bobby. A small statue of a cocker spaniel sits atop his grave in Oakridge cemetery.



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A National Historic
Landmark