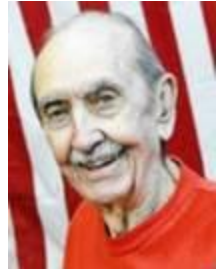


## Merlin J. Tipton (1930 – 2017), 7<sup>th</sup> State Geologist of South Dakota

Merlin J. Tipton passed away on August 2, 2017, at the Sanford Health Vermillion Care Center in Vermillion, South Dakota. Merlin was born on March 23, 1930, in Pierre, South Dakota. He attended school in Pierre and then in Vermillion at the University of South Dakota where he obtained a Master of Arts degree in Geology in May 1958. The subject of his Master's thesis was the *Geology of the Akron Quadrangle, South Dakota–Iowa*. Merlin served in the military from 1951-1954 and was a medic in the Korean War. He married Mary JoEllen Pillar on August 25, 1954, in Vermillion, South Dakota.



Merlin's employment with the State of South Dakota began in 1955 as a field assistant with the Geological Survey. He retired on February 14, 1992, after serving as South Dakota's State Geologist from 1981 until his retirement. Through his work as a geologist, an administrator, and as director of the Geological Survey, he helped to mentor many employees and laid the ground work for several activities that are still part of the day-to-day functioning of the Geological Survey.

Merlin was preceded in death by his wife JoEllen who died on August 3, 2012, and a sister Sharon. He is survived by his sons, Mark (Lynette) Tipton of Vermillion and John Tipton of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, a daughter, Mary (Calvin) Hanson of Meckling, South Dakota, three grandchildren, Doug (Mandy) Hanson, Dave (Jenny) Hanson, and Mike (Jenny) Hanson, and five great grandchildren, Kasey, Alexis, Karter, Madelyn, and Charlotte.