A Legacy and A Promise

The First One Hundred Years, 1884-1984

School of Veterinary Medicine
University of Pennsylvania

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Knowledge must come through action; you can have no test which is not fanciful, save by trial. Sophocles. 495-406 B.C., Oedipus Rex.

One hour of life, crowded to the full with glorious action, and filled with noble risks is worth whole years of those mean observances of paltry decorum. Sir Walter Scott, Count Robert of Paris, 1832.
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My first encounter with Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine took place nearly twenty-eight years ago when, to my considerable surprise, Dean Mark Allam invited me to take a brief respite from dairy cattle practice in Vermont to be interviewed for the Chair in Medicine recently vacated by Professor John Beck. Looking at it in 1956, from the vantage point of a non-alumnus, it seemed a pariah among American schools of veterinary medicine. With its cramped, antiquated physical plant, a pitifully small case load at New Bolton Center, and an overworked, underpaid faculty, the institution was largely ignored by state legislators, farm animal groups and other vital constituencies. To an outside first glance, the School appeared precariously suspended between life and death.

A deeper look at the situation disclosed a very different picture, for example, the School's remarkable tradition of excellence over many decades in a variety of disciplines and a set of contemporary circumstances which seemed to herald a new era of unprecedented growth and achievement. There were five principal elements to support this wildly optimistic outlook:

A proud tradition going back to 1884.

The School's location in the heart of a great center for biology and medicine.

A young, adventurous, intensely loyal nucleus of research-oriented faculty who were already at work in or near the mainstream of their disciplines.

A sympathetic University President and Provost.

General recognition, in terms of the national mood and funding situation, that the time was ripe.

There was a chance here — one could almost taste it — to take veterinary medical education out of its traditional vocational mold and to catch-up quickly with the best of modern medical institutions.

The ascent to excellence from the edge of extinction during twenty-five years of unprecedented growth is well documented in this important historical record, as are also the seventy-five often turbulent, sometimes somnolent, but always fascinating years preceding the renaissance. The history of Pennsylvania's Veterinary School may also be read profitably as a chronicle, in microcosm, of the profession's progress through ten eventful decades. These pages support the claim, as stated in the School's Mission Statement, that, since its founding in 1884, the University of Pennsylvania has led and molded the education and practice of veterinary medicine in the nation and the world.

Robert R. Marshak, D.V.M.
Dean, School of Veterinary Medicine
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is intended primarily as a documentation of the first one-hundred years of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and as a brief analytical account of how certain events influenced the evolvement of the School and the profession of veterinary medicine.

Since the most important element in the School's history was, and continues to be, people, much space has been devoted to the faculty. In preparing the book it was evident that records maintained at the School were not always complete, and in fact, during periods of renovation many records were lost. Therefore, some events are not chronicled in the detail which they deserve. The history of the School for the last thirty years is described extensively in the hope that this may serve as a permanent record for the period. A previous history was published on the occasion of the School's fiftieth anniversary in 1935, and, therefore, the years 1884-1935 are presented in somewhat less detail.

When the publication of this history was first conceived, Dean Robert R. Marshak appointed a committee, known as the Documentation Committee, to assist in the preparation of the book. Special thanks is due to this group for their interest and advice in the early planning of this book. Members of the Committee are: Drs. Loy C. Awkerman, Mark W. Allam, Robert E. Davies, M. Josephine Deubler, Claire G. Fox, William D. Hardy, Jr., Everett B. Miller, Todd O. Munson, Sheldon A. Steinberg, Evan L. Stubbs, and Leon P. Weiss. Dr. Samuel F. Scheidy, a former member of the Committee died in 1982; he was especially helpful in providing data drawn from his extensive professional activities. Dr. Stubbs spent many hours in assembling information and photographs relating to his long years on the faculty. Dr. Allam, former dean of the Veterinary School, made records of his years in the Deans Office available, and was refreshingly gracious in providing personal reflections upon the modern development of the School.

Many others contributed to the publication of A Legacy and a Promise. Mrs. June Johns typed manuscripts and provided a number of other services, and especially offered encouragement. Mrs. Helen J. Linwood provided past records, and Mrs. Jayne Thibodeau typed manuscripts and helped with general management. Mrs. Helma N. Weeks spent many hours in reading proofs and in helping to select photographs. Lynne R. Klunder supplied photographs and Eric P. Sandegren, a sophomore student, prepared the section on the student chapter of the AVMA. Gregory M. Thibodeau, a junior student, provided valuable assistance in preparing the section on the Comparative Cardiovascular Studies Unit. Miss Cathy Larmone was especially helpful in assembling material about New Bolton Center. Numerous individual faculty have supplied material and offered encouragement. Dr. Colin E. Harvey contributed material on the Audio-Visual Unit.

My special thanks to Ms. Dottie Rose and Mr. Louis Neibauer of Neibauer Press for their invaluable assistance in technical matters related to producing and publishing the book.

I am grateful for the privilege of authoring A Legacy and a Promise. It has been a labor of love.

John E. Martin, V.M.D.