

BUILT ON THE SHOULDERS OF VETERINARY GIANTS: JACK LONDON KINDA' GUY

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Dr. Charles Reid (1894 – 1979) was a 1918 graduate of the Kansas City Veterinary College (KCVC) who gained fame as the “Hollywood Veterinarian”. But his story is bigger than the silver screen.

He was the son of a strict British Army officer and was raised in the aristocratic settings of England. With everything in life in his favor he nonetheless convinced his father that he wanted a rough and independent life and immigrated to the United States at age 15.

He embarked on a Jack London lifestyle; crossing the country and making ends meet as a lumberjack, railroad worker, cowboy, coal miner, farm hand and oil driller. To get around he rode the rails.

Dr. Reid’s skill and interest in horses led him to enroll at KCVC and graduated in the final year of the college’s impressive 27 year run. This started a long and illustrious career in veterinary medicine. He cared for 2000 horses near Chicago and then served as a deputy veterinarian in Oklahoma.

Always looking for new challenges he headed west to the farms and ranches of California’s San Fernando Valley. As the region developed he took on the role of veterinarian to the stars. He was given charge of movie sets when animals were involved and worked with famous productions such as *Samson and Delilah*, *The Egyptian*, *Ben Hur* and countless westerns.

He was veterinarian for Roy Rogers’ Trigger, Lassie, Elsie the Cow and Francis the Talking Mule while treating many of the pets of the stars.

Dr. Reid’s interests were many and he was the driving force behind obtaining funds to get UC Davis’ SVM off the ground in 1948. He served in many veterinary leadership roles at the local, state and national levels and served as President of the California VMA in the middle 1940s. He was named Veterinarian of the Year in California and Nevada and he received the first out-of-state honorary membership in the Hawaii VMA.

His first visit to the islands with his wife Jewell came in the early 1970s. He continued to visit the state after her death and was a regular attendee at annual meetings hosted by the HVMA. He was welcomed by friends and mentored pre-veterinary students. He addressed their club on his last visit to the state in 1978.

Dr. Reid died in 1979 at the age of 85 leaving a substantial scholarship fund to pre-veterinary students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. That fund has awarded hundreds of scholarships totaling nearly a half-million dollars.

An historical article regarding animal film stars can be found at kcvma.com under the “about” button titled *Animal Film Stars*.

