

BUILT ON THE SHOULDERS OF VETERINARY GIANTS

Veterinary Leaders in Kansas City (Part One of Six)

A Pillar of the Kansas City Veterinary College (KCVC)

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This year's historical articles consider veterinary leaders who have made their marks in Kansas City and nationally. These leaders were successful in private practice, academia, military and/or industry and veterinary associations. All were AVMA Presidents.

First to be considered is Dr. Sesco Stewart (1855 – 1918) who has been called “a Pillar of KCVC”.

He was born in Canada in the early spring of 1855 and came to the US when he was seven years old. He earned an MD degree from Wooster University in Ohio and entered medical practice in Oakland, IA in 1885. Later, he graduated from Iowa State Agricultural College (ISU) with a degree in veterinary medicine. Others in his class included Dr. G.H. Glover who was a Dean at Colorado A&M (CSU); founder of Glover Laboratories in KC (a company distantly related to Bayer Animal Health); and AVMA President. Dr. W.B. Niles, a discoverer of hog cholera serum, was also a classmate.

After receiving his veterinary degree, Dr. Stewart was engaged in veterinary practice and government work in Iowa, Nebraska and KC.

Dr. Stewart took a keen interest in KCVC. So much so that he became a moving spirit in reorganization of the College in 1895 becoming KCVC President the same year. Later, Dr. Stewart was named Secretary – Treasurer and then Dean of the College

Dr. Stewart served as Secretary of the AVMA from 1895 to 1902. He was elected AVMA President in 1902 – 1903. He was the first of six AVMA Presidents from the Kansas City area between 1902 and 1992. The AVMA was 40 years old when the first Kansas City veterinarian was elected President. Additionally, he was the first President of the Missouri Valley Veterinary Medical Association.

After 23 years of service to the College, he died during the winter of 1918. This was the same year the KCVC closed its doors because of the establishment of state institutions offering veterinary education supported by public rather than private funds and the depletion of manpower during WW1.

It should be noted here that many administrative and faculty members of KCVC did not receive compensation. They earned their livelihood from other enterprises. Income to the College was applied to facilities and equipment. Their sacrifices and dedication influence our Professional lives today.

Dr. Stewart's biography is in the Main Public Library in Men of Affairs of Greater KC authored by the Press Club in 1912.

