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Built on the Shoulders of Veterinary Giants: A Brief History of KCVMA

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The beginnings of veterinary medical associations in Kansas City can be traced to the late 18th Century. During the following decades, associations merged to form what is today known as KCVMA.

Most of the more than 400 members are graduates of KSU and MU CVMs. However, many of the other colleges and schools are also represented.

Over 80 members are Life Members. These are veterinarians who are over 65 years of age. Some retired members graduated in the 1940s and 1950s. Our senior life member is Dr. Richard Buchli, who graduated from KSU in 1943 at the young age of 21. These members and those who came before them have successfully mentored their younger colleagues. They are considered to have the shoulders of giants where younger veterinarians are concerned.

The influence of Kansas City veterinarians has spread to state associations in Kansas and Missouri as well as nationally. Veterinarians have served as presidents, officers and committee members of those parent associations. Seven veterinarians have served as presidents of the AVMA during the national association's 150-plus year history. Current life members have chaired the AVMA executive board. Kansas City veterinarians have hosted the AVMA Annual Conference four times since 1907.

Kansas City was home to three private veterinary institutions between 1891 and 1918. The most well-known and longest lasting school was the Kansas City Veterinary College (KCVC), which graduated nearly 1,900 students during its 27 year history. When it closed its doors it was considered the finest veterinary college in the world. Western Veterinary College and University Veterinary College graduated 231 students during the few years they were open.

Dr. Joseph Flynn, a former AVMA president, opened one of the first veterinary clinics dedicated exclusively to dogs and cats in the US in 1910. He is known as the Father of Pet Animal Practice.

Veterinary care has changed significantly over the last century, but the mission and objectives of the KCVMA remain constant. Veterinarians continue to enhance the quality of care as well as community health and welfare. The objectives set forth by pioneering veterinarians continue to be accomplished by providing quality continuing education, demanding strong ethical behavior and promoting public awareness.

The above history of the KCVMA can be found on our history page. Enter at kcvma.com and click on the "about" tab. All of our historical articles, "Memoirs of a Country Veterinarian" and a 1949 article about the association can be found there.

