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BUILT ON THE SHOULDERS OF VETERINARY GIANTS

Early Veterinary Colleges in Kansas City (Part Two)

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Organized veterinary medicine in Kansas City began and flourished when the Kansas City Veterinary College (KCVC) opened its doors in October 1891.

Over its 27 year history, the College grew from modest beginnings with only three students in two rooms of the Schutte Building on Grand Avenue near 12th Street. Two other locations in Kansas City were occupied by the College until the final facility was erected at 15th Street and Lydia Avenue (now Paseo) in 1903. By 1909, the proud college was equipped with several classrooms and laboratories, a spacious library, a judging arena, a four story auditorium, a large gymnasium and a football team.

The KSU Sports Information Guide reported the Cats beat the College 32 to 0 on October 19, 1907. The KCVC Quarterly said "The game was an ideal one with regard to wrangling and slugging." The KSU team was coached by the legendary Mike Ahearn.

During the start of the 1908 session, 470 students were enrolled in three classes. A few years later in 1916 the College offered a four year program. When the College closed in 1918, 1,857 veterinarians had graduated and the facility had developed into one of the finest veterinary institutions in America and the world, according to Dr. Howard Erickson, President-elect of the American Veterinary Medical History Society and Professor of Physiology at KSU CVM.

At the time of its closing, the College was fully accredited by the AVMA and the US Bureau of Animal Industry. The degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science was conferred upon graduates until 1911. After that time, the DVM degree was awarded.

Many faculty members and students are listed among "Who's Who of the Veterinary Profession". They were leaders in private practice, government, industry, the AVMA and state and local associations.

Nearly all income went into construction and addition of new equipment. Most of the men who managed operations of the College and served on the faculty did not receive compensation. They earned their livelihood from other enterprises. Their sacrifices and dedication continue to affect our professional lives today.

Little is known about two other private institutions in Kansas City. Western Veterinary College located at 1121 Holmes graduated 178 veterinarians and operated between 1897 and 1908. University Veterinary College at 1902 East 19th had 53 graduates during its four years from 1902 to 1906. Across the US, there were 41 private veterinary institutions between 1882 and 1947. None exist today.

Visit kcvma.com and click on "About" to read more history of our Association. The next issue of *News and Notes* will have an article about Dr. Richard I. Buchli, the KCVMA's most senior Life Member.