

BUILT ON THE SHOULDERS OF VETERINARY GIANTS

Memoirs of a 93 Year Old Retired Vet

BY: STEVE JOSEPH DVM – HISTORIAN

Dr. F.J. “Mac” McCann has written his about life, family, community and professional experiences. The 1947 graduate of Iowa State University CVM settled in California, MO and today lives in Leawood. In this issue he shares thoughts about two giants.

“Graduates of veterinary schools in the forties probably recall those years on campus as among some of the best of treasured memories. There were nine such schools in the country. The one in Ames was considered near the top. Being admitted to study and attend was, to paraphrase the words of Charles Dickens, ‘The best of times and the worst of times’. One recalls the words of others -- the unbelievable long hours of study, the amazing new experiences, the new and lasting friendships as a time for tears and a time for laughter --- all crammed together, culminating with the heady anticipation of graduation into practice. Christian Petersen’s statue of The Gentle Doctor may exemplify it all.

“Peterson created this impressive piece of art during the depression years of the 20th Century while he was employed at ISU. The statue is not as mammoth as Michelangelo’s David. However, it was an attention getter nonetheless and he had clothes on too.

“Dr. Ralph R. Dykstra, a distinguished ISU CVM professor and Dean of the KSU CVM (1919 – 1948), was well known for his many articles published in veterinary journals. His “Veterinarian’s Creed” I believe is as poignant today as when it was written years ago. It represents standards, perhaps a tad high for some practitioners; but, for achievement of goals --- it is peerless.

“I’ve kept a framed combination of The Gentle Doctor and the Veterinarian’s Creed in the office for years. I believe it served not only as an inspiration, but a reminder of responsibility for this country vet during those three plus decades in practice”

Dr. McCann is one of three living graduates in his class. He is the senior among them.

The Veterinarian’s Creed

To regard my profession as something more than a means of livelihood;

To value character more highly than reputation and truth above popularity;

To be merciful and humane, preventing needless suffering among dumb beasts;

To be faithful and zealous, preventing needless loss to those I am called on to serve;

To guide my conduct by sober judgement and my judgement by a never-sleeping conscience;

To be modest and open-minded and thankful for every opportunity to increase my knowledge and my usefulness;

To be a co-worker with my fellow practitioners by the mutual interchange of counsel and assistance;

To be true to myself, measuring my success by the value of the service I render rather than the fee I receive.