

## **BUILT ON THE SHOULDERS OF VETERINARY GIANTS** **“It Just Looks Good!”**

**BY: DR. STEVE JOSEPH, KCVMA HISTORIAN**

Last year we considered six veterinarians from Kansas City who were AVMA Presidents. Here’s a follow-up article to one of them.

Dr. Joseph Charles Flynn (1878 – 1954) is described by veterinary historians as the Father of the Pet Animal Practice. In addition to his hospital at 3038 Main Street, he used a pet ambulance that in many ways is the predecessor of today’s mobile practice vehicle. The ambulance was manufactured here in Kansas City by the Holcker Company, which at the time was located on the northwest corner of 10th and Grand. A local publication said the conveyance was “...the latest type of limousine for dogs and cats.”

Dr. Flynn described the role of the ambulance. “Clients want modern and up-to-date methods when caring for their pets. With the ambulance...the patient can be transported to the hospital where prompt, efficient and immediate service is provided....”

Dr. Flynn didn’t feel cars offered comfort or safety for the sick or injured pet. He was sure that clients didn’t want their pet placed on the floor or “...in the turtleback of a Ford roadster in a cramped, uncomfortable and unclean place.”

Dr. Flynn added “...In a car without restraints, pets may jump out resulting in further injury causing anxiety for the pet owner and embarrassment for the veterinarian.”

I don’t know if Dr. Flynn was trying to market his skills or practice, but he did say “...a well kept ambulance is an ethical and common sense method of promoting veterinary medicine and the individual hospital.” He added “It just looks good!”

Children see the ambulance and talk about it. “When the child’s pet is sick or injured what parent will resist pleadings that the ambulance should be called?”

He added “...not only does the ambulance look good in front of the hospital, but it looks good in front of neighbors too.” As an example he said, “...the pet owner may be told they should be caring for orphans rather than pets. The client knows the neighbor doesn’t give a hoot for orphans let alone dogs and cats. When the ambulance is called it is proof the client cares about their pet.”

Dr. Flynn is Father of the Pet Animal Practice and was President of the AVMA from 1935 – 1936.

