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## Built on the Shoulders of Veterinary Giants: Revisiting Mac

BY: DR. STEVE JOSEPH, KCVMA HISTORIAN

Before the death of Dr. F.J. “Mac” McCann in September 2010, the KCVMA added the memoirs of the 90-plus-year-old veterinarian to our website historical page. Mac shared his diverse life experiences as a student and veterinarian, an adventurous young man who “rode the rails” and a designer of department store windows. He also shared his experiences while stationed with the Navy in the Philippines during World War II. It is a memorable and rewarding read!

The 1947 graduate of Iowa State University CVM settled and practiced in California, MO, and lived out the remainder of his life in Leawood, KS. He was the oldest member of his class and the last to die. He was 95 when he passed away in 2010.

Before his death he wrote to the association. Paraphrased excerpts from his letter are published here for the first time.

*“I’m truly beside myself starting this thank you note and attempting to express how honored I am. I find myself reading and rereading my experiences to savor the great life with which I have been blessed. With humility and moistened eyes I can only trust this thanks may resonate my appreciation.*

*“In addition to my family, copies of the memoirs have been placed in the Dr. Packer Room at ISU CVM for current and future students to read.*

*“Thanks to the KCVMA for promoting the history of our profession in Missouri, Iowa and Kansas.”*

In this letter, Mac also shared his thoughts about two veterinary giants who influenced his life. One was an artist and the other a veterinarian.

*“Graduates of veterinary colleges in the 1940s recall those years on campus as some of the most treasured memories. Being admitted to attend was, to use the words of Charles Dickens, “...the best and the worst of times,” One recalls the long hours of study, the amazing new experiences and the lasting friendships as a time for tears and a time for laughter all crammed together with the heady anticipation of graduation. Christian Petersen’s sculptures of ‘The Gentle Doctor’ and ‘The Veterinary Mural’ may exemplify it all. He created these impressive pieces of art at ISU during the depression years while he was employed at ISU.*

*“Dr. Ralph Dykstra, a distinguished ISU CVM professor and Dean of KSU CVM, wrote ‘The Veterinarian’s Creed’ that is as poignant today as when it was written years ago. It represents standards for achievement of goals. It is peerless.”*

Mac kept a framed copy of “The Gentle Doctor” and “The Veterinarian’s Creed” in his office. He wrote, *“I believe it served not only as an inspiration, but a reminder of responsibility for this country veterinarian during my decades of practice.”*

