

REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST

October 2008

As we approached our 60th Anniversary Celebration in October 2008 Dean Bennie Osburn developed a series of “Reflections on the Past” by decade to remember some of the School’s history, events and accomplishments. This is a summary of those documents, intentionally written in an informal style for the School’s faculty, staff and student audience.

The Beginnings – 1948-1959

Our 60th Anniversary celebrates the beginning of our teaching legacy. In 1948 we accepted our first class of DVM students. 42 men, 41 served in World War II. The GI Bill paid their tuition and a monthly stipend of \$50. Every graduate got a job offer from the U.S. Bureau of Animal Husbandry. Some of those students worked as carpenters and laborers on the construction crew that built Haring Hall. This year’s entering class of 131 students is 80% women and 20% men.

In the beginning, the school, as was the profession, was focused almost exclusively on the health issues facing livestock. Today, 70% of the profession is focused on companion animals and with more than 30 specialty services, the care of our animals has improved exponentially.

The Freshman Curriculum had 2 required courses: a 9-unit course in Anatomy in the Fall, and a 10-Unit course in Microbiology in the Spring. This year’s Freshman have 25 required courses and a choice of 35 elective course offerings.

Research projects during the 1950s focused on “Cold War” issues, fear of nuclear destruction lead to the study of the effects of radiation “fall-out.” Food animals were of great concern. Faculty characterized Bluetongue virus and developed the related vaccines and diagnostic tests. Faculty also researched and developed control strategies for Mycoplasmosis in poultry. Research today is on a broad range of topics from pet food contamination and infectious diseases, to stem cell therapies and antibiotic resistance.

The faculty has grown from its modest beginnings of 24 to 270 today.

The staff has grown from a handful to more than 800.

The total budget in 1948 was \$350,000. The total budget today is more than \$150 million.

At one time the entire school was contained in Haring Hall. Now we’re spread among 8 major buildings and more than 20 minor facilities or building clusters.

We use technologies every day that did not exist 60 years ago--Ultrasound, Nuclear Scintigraphy, Radiation Therapy, and Kidney Dialysis. We offer organ transplants and hip replacements, we routinely do colic surgeries with a high success rate, and there are now vaccines for Canine Distemper, Hepatitis and Lepto; Hemophilus in cattle, sheep and pigs; Border Disease in Sheep; Mastitis (J-5), and Rinderpest.

In the 1950s the faculty began to sort out the curriculum and individual faculty were assigned responsibility for specific disciplines. Six department-type groupings emerged initially in the areas of:

Anatomy, Clinical Pathology and Pathology
Microbiology, Parasitology and Genetics
Biochemistry, Physiology and Pharmacology
Public Health
Poultry
Clinics

The School's first faculty Executive Committee was elected in 1952 which would thereafter appoint all other committees of the faculty.

The first visit from the AVMA Council on Education was in 1952 which resulted in the School being given "public probation" which meant that the first class would graduate from an accredited school. Over the next decade curriculum, faculty recruitments and facilities all developed such that full accreditation was achieved in 1962.

The 1960s

By the end of the 1950s the School's faculty developed the following official academic department structure which was approved by Chancellor Mrak effective July 1, 1960.

Anatomy – L. M. Julian, Dept. Chair
Avian Medicine -- L. G. Raggi, Dept. Chair
Clinical Pathology -- O. W. Schalm, Dept. Chair
Medicine, Surgery and Clinics -- J. W. Kendrick, Dept. Chair
Microbiology -- J. R. Douglas, Dept. Chair
Pathology -- D. R. Cordy, Dept. Chair
Pharmacology, Physiology and Biochemistry -- S. A. Peoples, Dept. Chair
Public Health -- W. W. Sadler, Dept. Chair

While the country listened to Rock and Roll music and The Beatles, faculty and students were hard at work pursuing the veterinary curriculum, establishing experimental animal facilities, launching research programs and securing additional sources of funding.

The first food safety program in a veterinary school was established at UC Davis.

The Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine department was the first established at any veterinary school.

The MPVM program was born, which provided our students, as well as national and international students, the opportunity to learn scientific tools to manage population health important for large-scale ag production operations.

It became clear that Haring Hall would not suffice to house all of the current and expanding veterinary programs. But requests to build more veterinary facilities adjacent to Haring Hall conflicted with campus plans for expansion. The decision was made in 1962 to build new veterinary facilities “at the edge of campus” as soon as possible.

Programs identified for growth included: continuing education for practitioners; training opportunities for “real specialists” in the various types of veterinary practice; the establishment of special research institutes such as cancer and small animal disease; and an increase in DVM students, graduate students and faculty.

This was a time of new discoveries....NBC began broadcasting its TV programming in color; the Barbie doll arrived, the U.S. put a man on the moon, and the audio cassette was invented.

Here at the School, faculty studying the causes of an emphysema-type lung disease in horses developed the first equine thoracic surgery technique.

The California Turkey Project, lead by our faculty, became the national model for prevention and control of major turkey diseases.

Veterinary hematology was developed, providing definition of the function of blood cells and advancement of blood physiology and pathology.

John F. Kennedy was elected President, the Vietnam War began and the civil rights movement was in full swing.

Dr. William R. Pritchard was appointed the fourth Dean to lead the School. His tenure would span 20 years and see tremendous progress. The programs expanded to encompass all kinds of animals, become a major force in national biomedical research, and develop many international relationships.

The California Regional Primate Research Center (1962) and the Veterinary Genetics Laboratory (1963) were established.

The DVM classes were now up to 80 students per class and the graduate program tripled in size.

Major planning effort was devoted to facility expansion and in 1967 the School held the official groundbreaking ceremony for the Veterinary Medicine Teaching Hospital (VMTH).

The facilities for what is now known as the Center for Equine Health were completed in 1967 with funding from NIH to conduct research on horse health.

In 1968 the world’s first veterinary school-based program in zoological medicine was organized by Dr. Murray Fowler.

The 1970s

The average cost of a new house in 1970 was \$23,400, and the price of gas was 36 cents/gallon.

The new VMTH opened its doors and a new era in clinical veterinary medicine was launched. The hospital (construction costs totaling \$6 million) which was originally designed to see approximately 3,000 patients/year now sees more than 32,000/year. The VMTH was the nation's first large primary, secondary, and tertiary animal care center at a veterinary school.

The clinical faculty began the transformation of their traditional role as general practitioners to develop advanced clinical specialties.

The residency program began with 7 residents. By 1980 we had 60 residents enrolled in 19 specialties, and of course today we have 100 residents in 29 specialties, the most diverse program in the country.

Popular music featured Elton John, John Denver and Chicago and the latest inventions included microwave ovens, VCRs and the Laser.

Research leading to the discovery of most of the major blood group systems of cattle and horses resulted in the creation of the animal parentage controls that serve the cattle and horse breeding organizations today.

Faculty research efforts were expanding and major efforts were underway on zoonotic diseases such as: botulism, brucellosis, ehrlichiosis, equine encephalomyelitis, various forms of influenza, listeriosis, and salmonellosis.

As the area surrounding Davis began to shift away from animal agriculture to other types of farming enterprises, the School initiated planning efforts to establish a satellite teaching and research program in the central valley focused on livestock health and large production issues.

Our School was the first veterinary medical program in North America to adopt a core and track DVM curriculum.

Four new departments replaced the original clinical medicine department:

Department of Medicine
Department of Surgery
Department of Radiological Sciences
Department of Reproduction

The role of veterinarians continued to evolve, moving beyond the original agricultural and public health roots of veterinary medicine. Companion animal practice was now a major focus for many veterinarians. The School's small animal programs were expanding to respond to this need.

20 new faculty were hired.

President Richard Nixon resigned in 1973 facing impeachment charges for the Watergate scandal.

In 1975 the first Animal Behavior Service in the nation was initiated here at the School, and “Jaws” was the top grossing film.

Efforts to expand the School’s facilities were supported by the campus, but federal and state budget constraints resulted in a compromise that assigned space for a portion of our faculty in the newly constructed building for the medical school (Tupper Hall). To address additional space constraints the School was allowed to expand into some of the Surge buildings across the street from Haring Hall.

With the opening of VMTH II in 1979, the School was allowed to expand its DVM class size to 128 students per class.

The 1980s

The prime rate had hit its all time high of 21.5%. MTV brought music to television in a whole new format, top artists included Madonna and Michael Jackson, the Rubik’s cube swept the country, video games were taking hold, and the top film for the decade was ET: The Extraterrestrial.

The Veterinary Medical Teaching and Research Center (VMTRC) in Tulare officially opened, bringing service to dairy producers and providing a hands-on educational experience for our students in herd health and production management practices.

Dr. Edward A. Rhode became the School’s fifth Dean in 1982. Under his leadership the School expanded its instructional and research programs and established a strong continuing education program for practicing veterinarians.

The US News and World Report first named our school the nation’s top veterinary medical school in 1980.

During this time period, the School recognized the power of computer-assisted learning and electronic recordkeeping. We were the first school on the campus to establish a fund to provide for the upgrading of faculty and administrative computers on a regular schedule.

By 1985, the gender shift in veterinary education was well underway when 77 of our 127 entering students were female. This year 104 of 131 entering students are women.

On the national scene: the space shuttle Challenger broke apart during take-off, killing all seven crew members; the country watched the protestors in China’s Tiananmen Square; and the Berlin wall came down.

The School took over the management of the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory System from the state. Groundbreaking for the Thurman Laboratory was held in 1986. This \$10 million building was still under construction when an arson fire destroyed a large part of the facility in the early morning hours of April 15, 1987.

The School launched its formal fundraising initiative with the establishment of our Development Office to provide current use funds and build principal in perpetuity for the School's programs.

Researchers discovered that Taurine Deficiency was the cause of dilated cardiomyopathy in cats. Taurine is naturally found in mice.

The cause of Hyperkalemic Periodic Paralysis (HYPP) in horses was discovered and the HYPP test was developed here at the School.

The racetrack postmortem program operating through CAHFS was established. The results of this program have produced data that has influenced the horse racing industry to develop better track surfaces and change horse shoeing techniques to reduce injuries and breakdowns.

The 1980s were a time of advancements for animal health and educational tools including "the Virtual Heart," a CD-ROM interactive anatomy program to aid in learning the structures and functions of the canine heart.

The School launched the nation's first Pet Loss Support Hotline.

The methods and protocols for advanced veterinary critical care medicine were pioneered here—including airway management, advanced fluid therapy, intravenous catheter care protocols and CPR standards.

Feline infectious peritonitis virus (FIP) and feline leukemia virus (FELV) were isolated for the first time.

The 1990s

In 1990 Starbucks did not exist, by 2000 a Starbucks store was opening at a rate of one per day and today there are more than 16,000 stores in 44 countries.

In 1993, Beanie Babies were launched with a veterinary theme--Legs the Frog, Squealer the Pig, Flash the Dolphin.

Widespread use of personal computers and the internet became common place, and Nelson Mandela was released from prison after serving 30 years for opposing apartheid in S. Africa.

In 1991, Frederick A. Murphy became the sixth dean for the School at one of its most difficult times in the School's history. Between 1991 and 1993 the School lost \$2.5 million in state appropriations, dropped its entering class size from 122 to 108, and lost 15 faculty positions.

Through additional retirements during these years the School faced a loss of more than 25% of the faculty.

In response to the severe budget cuts the School reorganized its administrative structures in the Dean's Office and academic departments, reducing the number of departments from eleven to six and combining administrative functions.

In an effort to maintain and enhance the research enterprise of the school a number of species or discipline focused centers were established similar to the existing Center for Equine Health (formerly Equine Research Lab). These multidisciplinary centers provided a focal point for faculty collaboration and enhanced fundraising and grant writing success – Center for Companion Animal Health (CCAH), Wildlife Health Center (WHC), Center for Comparative Medicine (CCM), Veterinary Orthopedic Research Laboratory (VORL), and the Center for Vector-borne Diseases (CVEC).

By 1996, the School's research budget had grown to more than \$46 million, a significant portion of it from private funding.

We also received a bequest for student scholarships which was valued at the time to be \$5.6 million. By the time the land was sold in 2005 the total proceeds realized by the School was nearly \$13 million. Since the original gift, more than 650 students have received some financial support from this donation.

The Center for Comparative Medicine was created to support collaborative studies on the causes and cures for immunodeficiencies, leukemia, and persistent human and animal viruses.

Researchers developed the J-5 vaccine to protect cattle from mastitis, a feline sarcoma was linked to specific vaccination events, and an innovative ELISA was developed for diagnosis of bluetongue disease.

The Zoological Medicine Service initiated the Companion Bird Program to diagnose, treat and maintain the health of avian pets, educate residents and carry out research on new therapies.

The *UC Davis Book of Dogs* and *UC Davis Book of Horses* were published.

The first Friskies PetCare Residency in clinical animal behavior was completed at UC Davis.

The 100th feline kidney transplant was performed at the VMTH.

The Oiled Wildlife Care Network was established by California and led by the School's Wildlife Health Center to respond to oil spill emergencies, conduct related research and offer educational programs.

The first veterinary hemodialysis unit was created here at the School.

In 1996, I had the honor of being named the seventh dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine.

This was a time when construction had begun on the International Space Station, pagers were giving way to mobile phones, Bill Clinton was elected to his second term as president, and Dolly the Sheep was born--the first cloned mammal.

The Veterinary Emergency Response Team was created to save animals during California disasters such as floods and fires. They were instrumental in animal rescue in the Yuba City area floods in 1997, and deployed to North Carolina to help in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

Faculty researched methods for detecting major human pathogens, such as Cryptosporidium, in water supplies.

A new species of tick-transmitted Babesia affecting humans was identified here at the School and improved detection methods for E.coli 0157:H7 in cattle and other livestock was developed.

In 1998, the School celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a 4-day schedule of events, reunions and continuing education offerings. The festivities ended with a black tie reception in the Rotunda of the State Capitol and a Gala Dinner/Dance at the Sacramento Convention Center.

In an effort to rebuild some of our financial and faculty resources we were able to garner additional funding (\$2.5 million) from the State to grow our class size to 131, expand our resident program to 90 and create a presence in southern California.

At about the same time, the School was reviewed by the AVMA Council on Education and placed on limited accreditation status for major facility deficiencies associated with the 50-year old Haring Hall. This touched off a massive building campaign that would last for the next decade and include seven buildings.

As we approached the beginning of the new century the world was focused on the potential Y2K computer crash...

The 2000s

We weathered the Millennium Y2K scare with little or no disruption. We've embraced cell phones, iPods and plasma TVs. E-mail and text messaging are now standard communication tools.

Hot topics include energy costs, global warming, the safety of our food, and the costs of health care. The world as we knew it changed forever on September 11, 2001, and defense against terrorist acts has dominated our national policies ever since.

Here at the School we have continued to move forward, to launch new programs and research initiatives, to raise money, hire new faculty, and teach bright, talented students to be our future veterinary associates.

We built and opened six new buildings:

Gary Gourley Student Surgery Center
Center for Companion Animal Health
Claire Giannini Hoffman Equine Athletic Performance Lab
Gladys Valley Hall
Vet Med 3A
Multi-Purpose Teaching (MPT) facility

We plan to break ground for Vet Med 3B next spring (2009).

The School's building program convinced the AVMA Council on Education to restore our accreditation to FULL Accreditation Status in 2005.

The Shelter Medicine Program was launched with a \$2.2 million grant to provide medical care and preventive medicine services to participating animal shelters, conduct infectious disease research and offer resident training.

Pulmonary research showed for the first time that exposure to ozone can change how lungs develop and respond to air pollution, which will produce new approaches and treatments for asthma, especially in children.

The Equine Physical Therapy Service opened, the nation's first unit to meet unique diagnostic and therapeutic needs of injured performance horses.

A pilot leadership program offered in 2000 provided 22 incoming DVM students with a set of strategies for pursuing leadership opportunities balanced with work and personal life goals and obligations. This program is now offered to all incoming veterinary students.

The Wildlife Health Center expanded to include the Southern California Ecosystem Health Program and the Sea Doc Society (located in Washington).

The VMTRC celebrated its 20th Anniversary.

The Nutrition Support Center at the VMTH was unveiled—to provide specialized diet support for dogs and cats with clinical conditions or to support patient recovery strategies.

The Center for Vectorborne Disease identified the first evidence of West Nile virus in California in 2003 after testing 11,000 mosquito pools, 2,000 dead bird tissue and serum from 5,000 wild birds.

In 2004, the School organized its first Spay Day--400 faculty, staff and student volunteers united to perform 300 spay-neuter procedures in a single day to reduce pet overpopulation.

CCAH researchers discovered the genetic mutation that causes polycystic kidney disease, a common disorder of Persian Cats, and developed a diagnostic test to help breeders prevent this disease.

Food animal faculty developed a DNA-based test that detects minute amounts of ruminant protein in livestock feed; the test may reduce risks of BSE, or mad cow disease which is transmitted to food animals through contaminated feed products.

The Veterinary Emergency Response Team volunteers spent several weeks in the Fall of 2006 treating hundreds of sheep burned in a wild fire.

The Veterinary Medical Extension and the Wildlife Health Center launched the International Flu School to train veterinarians, public health experts, and producers dealing with prevention or outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza. Flu School is now offered in six African countries.

Faculty at the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory, working with state and federal agencies developed a single, rapid test to screen for foot-and-mouth disease and six “look-alike” diseases in livestock.

What is now becoming an annual Alpaca and Llama Symposium was co-sponsored by our students for owners, breeders and veterinarians to discuss camelid behavior, medicine and health issues and discuss future research needs.

Our CAHFS toxicologists discovered that it was the combining of melamine and cyanuric acid in pet food that caused the widespread acute kidney failure in cats last year (2007).

The faculty have been hard at work for the past several years assessing our veterinary curriculum and developing a new approach to enhance student learning and teaching methods.

This wraps up our Reflections on the Past -- just a small sampling of all of the amazing activities that have gone on here at the School of Veterinary Medicine over the past 60 years.

Thoughts on the Future

As we gather to celebrate the rich history and accomplishments of our colleagues and the School over the past 60 years, I can't help but look forward to embrace the next era.

The one thing that is always constant is change and veterinary medicine is no exception.

We have helped hundreds of thousands of animals and their owners in the past and that tradition will continue in ways we can't even imagine today.

I think veterinary medicine will continue to embrace the “one medicine, one health, global health” concepts.

Environmental/ecosystem health will be an even bigger issue and will be the platform to bring together human, animal, environmental, wildlife, agriculture, pest controls, air, water, and energy issues.

While research realities such as funding, equipment, space, expertise and regulations will challenge our scientific pursuits, we will continue to develop new knowledge, new therapies, and new approaches to health and welfare issues for animals and people.

Our curriculum discussions have placed us in a position to provide cutting edge educational programs for our students, and set the bar for the educational standards in veterinary medicine. The development of new and integrated curriculum approaches is an outstanding use of our time and energies and will be of significant importance to the veterinary profession as a whole.

The commitment of our faculty, staff and students to clinical and public service is amazing and an area in which we are recognized locally, nationally and even internationally. Service will continue to be a way for us to help animals and people, to showcase our expertise and use our research developments to solve real problems.

In the future we will see new developments: in our food systems to maintain livestock health and welfare, and maintain safe, healthy food; in oncology treatments and even a vaccine for cancer(s); nutrition and its impacts on improving health; in the identification and understanding of emerging infectious diseases and effective control strategies; in the advancement of comparative medicine approaches to animal and human health; in the alleviation of environmental toxicants, and in the use of genetics, genomics and stem cell biology in the prevention and treatment of disease and injury.

We will see a greater number of women and persons of color in leadership positions, the “shrinking” of the global community with increased travel, communication channels, and economic interdependence, and an increased use and application of computer technologies.

This school is made up of a group of progressive individuals, never satisfied with status quo, never truly standing still. It’s the endless possibilities of what we can accomplish, the creative energy that the faculty, staff and students bring to our community and the ability to imagine something new or different that keeps us at the forefront of our community and our profession.

The future is bright, the challenges are many, but our core mission--to help animals, is what makes us special.

Happy 60th Anniversary!

Bennie I. Osburn
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