Alumni Feature:

Interview with Phillip D. Pearson

Class of 1956

Story County, Ames, and Iowa State University are very familiar areas to Dr. Phillip Pearson. He was born and raised in Story County, educated in the Ames Public School system, and he earned his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy degrees at Iowa State University in 1956 and 1962.

Following graduation in 1956, Dr. Pearson undertook a one-year internship at Angell Memorial Animal Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. Since completion of his internship, he has held academic positions in the Departments of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery at Iowa State University and the University of Missouri. Presently, he is serving as Professor of Veterinary Clinical Sciences and the Biomedical Engineering Program as well as Chairman of the Small Animal Clinic at Iowa State.

Nineteen-thirty-five Paulson Drive is home to Dr. Pearson, his wife, Mary Jane, and their four children; Jane, eleven, Bryan, eight-and-one-half, Todd, four, and Julie, one and one-half.

Dr. Pearson has taken a very active role in affairs of his community, the College of Veterinary Medicine, and the University. Community activities include an eight-year tenure as scoutmaster, member and Vice-President of the Ames Kiwanis Club, and a very active part in the functions of Bethesda Lutheran Church. His activities in the College of Veterinary Medicine range from the pre-veterinary level to graduate students as is shown by his work as a pre-veterinary student advisor and member of the Pre-Veterinary Curriculum Committee, advisor to the Student Chapter of A.V.M.A., and member of the Graduate Student Studies Committee. He has also played an active role in the organization of small animal short courses for practicing veterinarians.

All-University positions include membership on University Scholarship, Student Affairs, and Grants Committees and Vice-Chairman of the Faculty Council.

Dr. Pearson has very deep feelings about his activities and says, "I greatly enjoy working with the fine students and faculty at Iowa State. Teaching is one of my greatest pleasures." This latter statement is well supported by Dr. Pearson receiving the Norden Distinguished Teacher Award in 1962 and the Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award in the College of Veterinary Medicine in 1968.

Research and scientific publications as well as teaching are important areas of his professional life. Most prominent in the areas of research are his studies of canine nephritis, artificial hearts, patellar luxations, and cruciate ligament repair. Dr. Pearson has played an important role in the research of artificial devices to aid in the repair of patellar luxations and ruptured cruciate ligaments. He has personally written or co-authored over twenty-five publications and has presented over sixty professional papers and seminars on these and other topics.

Membership in professional organizations includes A.V.M.A., A.A.H.A., Phi Zeta, Alpha Zeta, Gamma Sigma Delta, Phi Kappa Phi, The American Society for Artificial Internal Organs, as well as several others.

Dr. Pearson predicts a great future for the small animal practitioner and acknowledged the increased demand for veterinarians in this area both in Iowa and the nation. Small animal medicine and surgery is gaining in popularity in all colleges of veterinary medicine and throughout the country.

He later reminisced about the times when career aspirations as a small animal practitioner were not so popular at
Iowa State. According to Dr. Pearson there has been a great increase in emphasis on small animal medicine and surgery since the early 1950's and the change in popularity has been taking shape ever since.

A strong advocate of the internship programs, Dr. Pearson encourages students to take advantage of these programs to gain experience and knowledge of a wide variety of cases of clinical medicine and surgery.

One of the advancements in veterinary medicine cited by Dr. Pearson is the movement of cities to establish a central veterinary hospital for animal hospitalization and major surgery. Under this arrangement individual veterinarians or group practices would maintain their own clinics for outpatient care only. One of the reasons behind this is the high cost of building construction and equipment. Several of these are now being contemplated or are already in operation.

As a recipient of the Riser Small Animal Award in 1956, Dr. Pearson has proven himself outstanding in the area of small animal medicine and surgery and an asset to the College of Veterinary Medicine and Iowa State University.

Homecoming '69 Becomes "Alex Begg Appreciation Day"

January 1, 1970, marked 43 years of continued, loyal service of Alexander "Alex" William Begg to the College of Veterinary Medicine, Iowa State University.

Mr. Begg was born in Rother, Scotland, Nov. 22, 1903, and at the age of five moved to the United States to settle on a farm near Grand Junction, Iowa, with his parents and younger sisters. Here Alex attended grade and high school.

Alex graduated from high school in 1922 and entered Iowa State College majoring in animal husbandry. However, after two years he found it necessary to support himself and went to work on the Dean C. F. Curtiss farm just south of campus town. He worked on a Kelly, Iowa, farm for a time before being employed by the Veterinary Clinic, Division of Veterinary Medicine on January 1, 1927. Since that time his responsibilities have included care of the small and large animals in the clinic wards, all-around dependable handyman, and a courier and messenger for the College of Veterinary Medicine (which he presently holds).

In the discharge of his responsibilities he has always been known to be unusually loyal and faithful and ready and willing to work long hours above and beyond the call of duty. He has regularly been the first person on the job in the morning and the last to leave at night. He always observed the condition of the clinic patients before leaving at night, contacting the attending clinician in the event of problems. Often he has returned to the hospital to admit or discharge patients. He has either fed and watered the clinic patients on Sundays and holidays or supervised their care. And certainly not least of all, Alex has always been very good with animals, kind and never abusive.

Dr. Mack A. Emmerson did his customary terrific job in keeping the celebration a secret to Alex (which wasn't easy since he carries the mail to and from Dr. Emmerson's office) while informing all alums and staff members. The alums and staff members, organized by Dr. Emmerson, attempted to show their undying appreciation and gratitude to Alex on Oct. 26, at the Homecoming luncheon held at the Veterinary Quadrangle. At the proceedings Alex was presented with tickets for him and his wife to the Homecoming game with Kansas University and a portrait of himself. Dr. Emmerson then surprised Alex with a gift certificate for a colored television and a bank money order for $2,000. To this was added a "Gentle Veterinarian" statuette presented by the Jr.