1988

The Life and Times of Dr. John H. Greve

Kelley Meckley
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian

Part of the Higher Education Commons, and the Veterinary Medicine Commons

Recommended Citation
Meckley, Kelley (1988) "The Life and Times of Dr. John H. Greve," Iowa State University Veterinarian: Vol. 50 : Iss. 1 , Article 22.
Available at: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian/vol50/iss1/22

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Iowa State University Veterinarian by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
The Life and Times of Dr. John H. Greve
Kelley Meckley*

Twenty-one years as faculty advisor to the ISU Veterinarian? Some of the first year vet students aren't even that old! Mention this to Dr. Greve and he'll either claim to be a fossil or show you his dinosaur tie. Nevertheless, his service to the journal has been unsurpassed. Although the ISU Veterinarian is a student-run journal, Dr. Greve assists in many areas of its production, including the basic mechanics of publication. He helps prepare annual requests for GSB funding, and he is an excellent resource with respect to the journal's history. As a sounding board for new ideas, he can recall what's been done in the past and why those ideas failed or succeeded. In addition, he was very diligent in finding a new printer when the ISU Press closed its doors in 1986. Perhaps he is most useful when student editors can't seem to find "just the right word," for Dr. Greve, the master of medical terminology, suffers from a chronic obsession with words. If you think the word obsession may be too strong, ask him about the word "sparrowfart" (it's not what you think). He knows not only what the word means, but from where and how it originated. If your conception of an "Amazon Woman" is of one who's overly endowed, ask Dr. Greve for the real meaning of the word amazon. The story is quite interesting.

Only one thing has surpassed Dr. Greve's years of dedication to the ISU Veterinarian, and that is his years as an ISU professor. He received his DVM at Michigan State University in 1958 and his Master of Science Degree in Avian Pathology in 1959. He then received his PhD. in Veterinary Parasitology in 1963 from Purdue University. As a professor at Iowa State since 1963, Dr. Greve has taught courses in parasitology, necropsy, and the notorious "words for nerds" (medical terminology).

His current research projects involve the pathology of parasitism, the control of swine ascarids, and believe it or not, the biology of the cat flea. He calls his stock-water tank of fleas the "Circus Maximus" (which is not, by the way, a muscle of the pelvic limb).

Dr. Greve's teaching capabilities have won him several awards, including the Norden Distinguished Teacher Award in 1965, and the AMOCO Outstanding Teacher Award in 1972. According to many students, however, Dr. Greve's classroom anecdotes may be just a little more interesting than what he teaches. Each year he literally dances to the tune of "The Groovy Grubworm." Wiggling and jiggling among the tangle of microphone cords, he culminates his act by singing "I'm a grub worm!"

One day last spring during a slide presentation in a parasitology lecture, a slide from an unknown source "accidentally" appeared on the screen. It read, "Dr. Greve is a stud." A few weeks later, a second slide "accidentally" appeared on the screen. It read, "Definition of the word stud: 1) an iron brace across the link of a chain cable, 2) little metal rivets on the surface of a leather bracelet, 3) not the racehorse John Henry, 4) archaic def: Dr. John H. Greve." When accused of subliminal advertising, Dr. Greve protested that he had not selected that slide as a part of the lecture, and wondered if the current junior class was responsible.

Here's a story depicting the "tough side" of Dr. Greve:

One morning early this semester, a sophomore student, known to be involved in many extracurricular activities, arrived late to one of Dr. Greve's parasitology lectures and took her seat in the front row. Dr. Greve, who had been writing on the chalkboard, stopped his work, glared at the student over his spectacles, put down his chalk, and walked over to where she was seated.

"Good morning, Miss _______," he said loudly, "I'm glad you could make it to the lecture."
few members of the class snickered. Miss ______ shrank in her chair, and began explaining why she was late. Dr. Greve appeared unimpressed. "You are so d--n busy," he declared, "Are you sure you have time for this course?" The class, including Miss ______, erupted with laughter as Dr. Greve returned to the chalkboard to resume his lecture. Needless to say, Miss ______'s punctuality improved markedly that semester.

In addition to being very active at Iowa State, Dr. Greve is a member of fifteen community and professional organizations. Among these include the Kiwanis Club of Ames, the AVMA, the American Society of Parasitologists, the Helminthological Society of Washington, and the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology. He is the current faculty advisor for SCAVMA, and has served as such for two previous academic terms. He has also served several terms as advisor to the local chapter of Omega Tau Sigma, and is currently the secretary-treasurer of the chapter's governing board.

As a contributing author to Zoo and Wild Animal Medicine, 1st edition, Dr. Greve was awarded a membership plaque into the Order of Aardvark. When his work appeared in the book's 2nd edition, he was awarded yet another membership into the Order of Kukukifuku (Swahili for Aardvark). Since then, the aardvark has held an almost revered spot in Dr. Greve's life. He is now the proud owner of a coffee mug which reads "Being a teacher is ard-vark." He was quick to mention that the word aardvark is Dutch for "dirt pig". Whether or not that comment was in reference to being a teacher, who knows.

After years of playing racquetball and handball, Dr. Greve partook of two hobbies "more sedentary for a man of his age" — gardening and stamp collecting. His stamp collection, which he began in 1970, is unique in one simple aspect. They're all stamps of parasites. Although he doesn't know the exact number of stamps in his collection, he presently has a few thousand stamps from all over the world. Twenty-five of these stamps he made into slides to show during his parasitology lectures. When asked by an awe-struck student if stamps of parasites are ever printed in America, he promptly replied, "Oh yes, we had one with a mosquito on it in 1962."

Without a doubt, Dr. Greve is quite a character, and is well-liked by his students. Should you ever need a favor from him, just remember two things: he hates the color purple, and compliments never bore him.