

# SVME NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

Volume 6, Number 1

January 2000

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine, Nursing and Allied Health in collaboration with the Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care, presented the conference "Veterinary Bioethics in the 21st Century: Teaching and Veterinary Practice - Where do we go from here?" on November 19-20, 1999. As the title suggests, the conference planners elected to focus on ethical issues in veterinary education and in veterinary practice, leaving myriad veterinary medical ethical issues for later conferences.

Many conference attendees were students and faculty of Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine, Nursing and Allied Health. Of great significance is that the conference hosts invited a veterinary student and a faculty member from each of the U. S. veterinary colleges to attend, at Tuskegee University's expense. It was my impression that the student attendees were among the brightest from our nation's veterinary colleges, and even some from Canada. Certainly the level of interest in the subject matter among students was very high and the intensity and thoughtfulness of discussion was truly impressive.

The format of the conference included presentations by leaders in the field of veterinary medicine and in particular veterinary medical ethics. What I will refer to as the "veterinary medical ethics content speakers roster," in order of appearance and with markedly abbreviated credits, included key note speaker Franklin M. Lowe, DVM, PhD, President of Becker College, Robert Whitney, DVM, President of Earthspan, Lanny Kraus, Professor of Medical Humanities, Emeritus, University of Rochester, Donald Draper, DVM, PhD, Professor of Anatomy, Ethics, and Veterinary Entrepreneurship at Iowa State University and our SVME president-elect, Mr. Fred Jones, President, Tuskegee SCVMA, Bernard Rollin, PhD, Professor of Philosophy and Biophysics and Director, Bioethical planning at Colorado State University, Charles McCarthy, PhD, Senior Research Fellow, Kennedy Institute of Ethics and Former Director of the PHS Office From Research

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(continued from page 1)

Risks, Jerry Tannebaum, JD, MS, a past president of SVME and Professor in the Department of Population Health and Reproduction at the School of Veterinary Medicine, and Gary Comstock, PhD, founder of the Iowa State University Bioethics Institutes.

Gary Comstock, in addition to a platform presentation and demonstration on "Teaching Bioethics Using Case Studies," planned the breakout sessions, which were case studies in small groups. The case studies discussions and reports were a substantial and vital component symposium. They provided some insight and experience for both students and faculty in using this method of instruction for veterinary medical ethics.

Two of the most enlightening presentations associated with the symposium were apart from "veterinary medical ethics," per se. Yet, they raised some concepts and issues that are central to a major segment of bioethics in general. That segment is the ethics of dealing with vulnerable populations. The presentations were related to the Tuskegee Syphilis Study from different views in different degrees. On Friday Giselle Corbie-Smith, MD, gave an excellent after dinner presentation on "Considerations for

Carrying out Research on Vulnerable Populations: Lessons Learned from Tuskegee. Then on Saturday evening, at the Tuskegee Multicultural Center and Museum, Fred D. Gray, Esq., a prominent civil rights attorney and the attorney for victims of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, gave a stirring and memorable talk on the "Early History of the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama." The conference made me much more aware that issues of race and vulnerability, among others, add important nuances and complexities to the already incomprehensibly complex ethical issues in veterinary medicine and biotechnology.

Recognizing that I'll overlook deserving people, I thank Walter C. Bowie, DVM, PhD, Alphonza Atkinson, DVM, MPH, PhD, Earl Dixon, PhD, and Margaret Chambers, DVM, PhD, of the Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine, Nursing and Allied Health, and September Williams, MD, and others of the Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care for a thoroughly educational and enjoyable experience.

*Ronald M. McLaughlin, DVM*  
President, SVME

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

In the past year the newsletter has moved into the electronic age. This was not done without hurt as it is often the case with major changes. Thank to [REDACTED] the problem of accessing the newsletter on the web site was solved rapidly. It is my hope that these sort of problems will be left behind for the present issue and the next ones. We will continue to mail a hard-copy version of the Newsletter to all members who request it.

As a new year is starting, a new millennium is approaching and the Society is growing I think we should work to improve the exchanges of information between SVME members. I welcome your suggestions regarding matters you would like to see in the Newsletter. I, once again, urge all SVME members to consider contributing to the Newsletter whether it is a book review, an opinion piece or simply information about professional activities.

I can be contacted at <[scloutie@vetmed.wsu.edu](mailto:scloutie@vetmed.wsu.edu)> or c/o Department of VCAPP, College of Veterinary Medicine, Washington State University, PO Box 646520, Pullman, WA, 99164-6520.

*Sylvie Cloutier, PhD*  
Editor, SVME

## PRESIDENT-ELECT'S MESSAGE: SURFIN' THE NET

Over the holidays I had a few moments to do some searching on the Internet. I was curious to find out what new material was available on ethics. Well, my few moments turned into many hours. There is a wealth of material available. As with most things on the Internet, some of it is good and some of it is questionable. At the risk of repeating information that our readers may already know, several of the more interesting sites are presented below. I do this because I believe there may be possibilities that the *Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics* may want to consider in the future.

*Ethics Updates* (<http://ethics.acusd.edu/>) is edited by Lawrence M. Hinman. Although intended for ethics instructors and students, this web page contains a lot of useful information for anyone interested in ethics. It contains updates on current literature that relates to popular and professional ethics. The site contains a search mechanism to find specific topics of interest. The source material is divided into topics related to ethical theory and to applied ethics. There are numerous choices under each of these major categories. Under applied ethics for example, there are links to animal rights, environmental ethics, bioethics, euthanasia, world hunger, and others. The site also provides opportunities to participate in ethics forums and a calendar of upcoming ethics conferences. This site also has a link to interesting ethical cases that are available for discussion.

Another interesting site is [onlineethics.org](http://onlineethics.org/) (<http://onlineethics.org/>). This site is intended for engineers and scientists. We call the site to your attention because it contains concepts that the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics might want to consider. For example they have an Online Ethics Center Help-Line. This is intended for their professional members who are encountering ethical problems in their work. Its purpose is to provide resources to help people maintain high ethical standards of behavior and help them make correct decisions when they encounter complex and conflicting responsibilities. Is there a need for a similar system in veterinary medicine? We suspect there is.

One of the better sites on bioethics is The Joseph and Rose Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University (<http://www.georgetown.edu/>). This site contains a wealth of information on ethics related to teaching and research, lectures and consultations, and numerous symposia and workshops. They also

maintain BIOETHICSLINE. This is an information retrieval system related to bioethics and is a part of the National Library of Medicine. This site also contains links to other important sources of information on bioethics.

*Biomedical Ethics* is a newsletter of the European Network for Biomedical Ethics (<http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/>). This publication usually contains articles that have content with parallels to the veterinary profession. A recent issue contained articles on bioethics and health informatics, the confidentiality of electronic health records, ethics and telemedicine, and the ethics of prognostic scoring systems. How soon will these topics be of importance to veterinary medical ethics? We suspect sooner rather than later.

Several other sites that readers might want to explore are animal rights (<http://www.monmouth.edu/>), hunting ethics (<http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/>), and human-animal ethics and the vegetarian (<http://www.geocities.com/>). Each of these sites contains numerous links to information related to various facets of animal ethics. Readers are alerted that some of the information is factual and a lot of it is opinion.

Finally, to assist your web surfing activities, we present the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Internet Users. This information was obtained from Diane Johnson, Vice President of eBusiness, Principal Financial Group.

1. To find a phrase, put double quotes around the words. For example: "animal ethics"
2. To make sure the word is in a document, put a + sign in front of it. Example: + animal +ethics
3. Always use lowercase searching, unless you want to restrict your search to proper names.
4. Begin with Alta Vista for specific searches (The top search engines are Alta Vista, Excite, Go, HotBot, Lycos).
5. Always begin with Yahoo! For general topics such as ethics.
6. Use more than one index for your search because results will vary.
7. To find a word that you were searching for in a web page, type <Ctrl>F. The browser will jump to the first appearance of the word.

**Don Draper**, DVM  
President-Elect, SVME

## Suggestions for Member Book Reviews

There is no book review in this issue of the newsletter. I would like to make this a regular feature of the newsletter. That is why I am providing some suggestions of books that could be reviewed:

*Attitudes to Animals: Views in Animal Welfare.* Ed. by F.L. Dolins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1999). Pp. x+262. Price \$23.95 paperback.

*Responsible Conduct with Animals in Research.* By L.A. Hart. New York: Oxford University Press (1998). Pp.xiii+193. Price \$60.00.

*Darwinian Dominion: Animal Welfare and Human Interests.* By L. Petrinovich. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press (1998). Pp. ix+448. Price \$45.00.

*Encyclopaedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare.* Edited by Marc Bekoff and Clary EA. Meaney. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press (1998). Pp. 472. Price \$59.95.

I encourage any member who would like to review one of these books or any other books that could be of interest to the members for the next issues to let me know.

*Sylvie Cloutier, PhD*  
Editor, SVME

**Sharing  
Book Reviews  
with members  
could be  
regular feature  
of SVME**

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The bank balance stands at \$ [REDACTED]

Since the October Newsletter we have only received [REDACTED] dues payments. This makes a total of [REDACTED] members out of [REDACTED] that have paid their 1999-2000 dues. Hopefully the response from this newsletter will bring in most of the outstanding dues.

Included in this newsletter is a dues reminder (see page 5).

We are pleased to be able to keep our dues at the very reasonable amount of \$20 for regular members and \$5 for students. These dues are used exclusively to cover the costs of printing and mailing the

newsletter, maintaining the VETETHIC list, and running the annual meeting. Please mail your dues, and include the remittance notice with the copy of your name and address. Your prompt attention to this will save the Society time and cost of sending reminders.

Please send your membership payment to Baseline Animal Clinic Ltd, 220 E.. Baseline Road, Tempe AZ 85283

## OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

*President:* Ronald L. McLaughlin, DVM

*President-Elect:* Donald D. Draper, DVM, PhD, MBA

*Treasurer:* Hal L. Jenkins, DVM

*Parliamentarian:* Albert S. Dorn, DVM

*Secretary:* Ione Smith, DVM

*Historian:* Lawrence Carbone, DVM, MA

*Immediate Past-President:* Bob Speth, PhD

*Past-Presidents:* Robert Shomer, VMD

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Jerrold Tannenbaum, MA, JD

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD

*Hal L. Jenkins, DVM*  
Treasurer, SVME

## SVME DUES NOTICE

**January 20, 2000**

**Ronald L. McLaughlin, DVM, President**  
**Donald D. Draper, DVM, Ph.D., President-Elect**  
**Robert C. Speth, Ph.D., Past-President**  
**Ione L. Smith DVM, Secretary**  
**Hal L. Jenkins, DVM., Treasurer**  
**Albert S. Dorn, DVM, Parliamentarian**  
**Larry G. Carbone, DVM, Historian**

We are sending this dues notice with the Newsletter to save on postage costs. Dues for 2000-2001 are now payable. We appreciate your past support and look forward to a new and even better year for the Society. The dues payment of \$20.00 (\$5.00 for students) is payable to: ***Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics or SVME***. Membership will be in force from July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001.

Send checks to: SVME c/o Hal L. Jenkins,  
Baseline Animal Clinic Ltd,  
220 E. Baseline Road,  
Tempe AZ 85283

Payment Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Check Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this section of the form with your dues payment (see amounts above) to help us keep our records up to date.

NAME and ADDRESS CORRECTION IF NECESSARY:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

FAX NUMBER: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

ELECTRONIC MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box  if you are not on VETETHIC and would like to be.

(Email address is required)

### COMMENT:

On November 19-20, Tuskegee University's College of Veterinary Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health, and the Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care sponsored a conference entitled, "Veterinary Bioethics in the 21st Century: Teaching and Veterinary Practice - Where do we go from here?" The conference organizers invited student and faculty representatives from each veterinary school in the US to attend, and some 20 schools responded. The SVME was represented by five past, present, or future Society presidents: Drs. [REDACTED]. Several other SVME members, including student members, also attended.

I will leave it to others to report on the main portion of the meeting. I would like to report on an extraordinary session held Saturday evening, after the main conference concluded.

We visited the new Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center in downtown Tuskegee to hear a presentation from Mr. Fred D. Gray. Mr. Gray, now 69 years old, is an attorney who played a key role in the civil rights movement in central Alabama. His clients included Rosa Parks, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., participants in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Selma to Montgomery March, and survivors of the Tuskegee/US Public Health Service syphilis study. Throughout his 45 year career, Mr. Gray vigorously pursued legal cases involving desegregation. Perhaps his most significant case was *Gomillion v. Lightfoot*, which he argued successfully before the US Supreme Court in 1960. In this case, the Alabama legislature had attempted to redraw the city limits of Tuskegee to exclude black voters, thereby ensuring a white majority in Tuskegee elections.

Mr. Gray's presentation was outstanding. It was an honor and a privilege to be able to hear about the civil rights movement from someone who had actually played a key role in it. As an attorney and activist, Mr. Gray came across as a forceful

advocate for equal rights under the law. However, his personal demeanor and attitude conveyed the strength and grace of his own character.

The most dramatic point in the evening was when Mr. Gray described his work on behalf of the men who had been used as experimental subjects, without their knowledge, in the infamous Tuskegee syphilis study. One of the symposium participants, Dr. Charles McCarthy, formerly served as the head of the Office of Protection from Research Risks at the National Institutes of Health. Dr. McCarthy noted in a comment to Mr. Gray that he had met Mr. Gray in the early 1970's when Mr. Gray presented testimony at a Senate hearing on behalf of the Tuskegee syphilis study participants. Mr. Gray responded that, as a result of those hearings, federal legislation was passed to guarantee that something like the Tuskegee study would never happen again. To that, Dr. McCarthy responded, "I drafted that legislation."

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### MEMBER NEWS

**SVME student chapter:** The development of a SVME student chapter is slowly but surely moving on at UPENN. There are actually about 40 interested students, representing all 4 classes. Early meetings have revealed a broad range of interests, from "convenience" euthanasia to purpose breeding animals for student exercises.

They are meeting in January to discuss further developments and to plan activities for the chapter. They would also like to invite SVME member, not on the teaching faculty, to come and talk to them about Veterinary ethic.

If any SVME member is interested to meet the UPENN students to discuss veterinary ethic, please contact [REDACTED]

## COMMENT (CONTINUED)

After his presentation, Mr. Gray autographed copies of two of his books, *Bus Ride to Justice* and *Tuskegee Syphilis Study*. All the available copies of both books were sold. It was truly a remarkable evening.

What does this have to do with veterinary ethics? Not a lot, other than to help put veterinary ethics in perspective. Some of the issues we deal with in veterinary and animal ethics seem to me

somewhat less significant when viewed in the larger context of the ongoing struggle for civil rights and justice for human beings.

*John R. Boyce*  
Bismarck, ND

## NEWS OF INTEREST

### **NATIONAL LABORATORY ANIMAL TECHNICIAN WEEK, January 30 - February 5, 2000:**

Join us in celebrating the first annual NATIONAL LABORATORY ANIMAL TECHNICIAN WEEK, January 30 - February 5, 2000: The American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS) is excited to announce the designation of January 30 - February 5, 2000, as the first National Laboratory Animal Technician Week. This event will be celebrated annually to recognize laboratory animal technicians nationwide for their essential contributions as members of the research team. AALAS is a professional, nonprofit association of people concerned with the study, care, and production of laboratory animals. AALAS serves society through education and the advancement of responsible laboratory animal care and use.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
LABORATORY ANIMAL SCIENCE  
9190 Crestwyn Hills Drive  
Memphis, TN 38125  
Phone: (901) 754-8620 \* Fax: (901) 753-0046 \* E-mail: [info@aalas.org](mailto:info@aalas.org)  
<http://www.aalas.org>  
\* Fax on Demand: (901) 754-2546

### **A Project on Animal Bioethics**

Researchers at Oregon State University are working to establish a new regional project on animal bioethics to encourage the development of active interdisciplinary research projects and outreach programs.

It would be stating the obvious to say that the animal sciences and animal agriculture are faced with increasing numbers of socially contentious issues. What isn't so obvious is what to do about these challenges. Typically, animal scientists aren't trained in the art of resolving social issues. As a result, we asked a philosopher to come to the 1997

meeting of the American Society of Animal Sciences and give his recommendation on what we could do. One of his recommendations (Thompson, 1998. *J. Animal Science* 77:372-377) was that animal scientists need to develop a new professional ethic. And the way to do that included teaching more courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels dealing with ethical issues in animal agriculture, engaging in more effective and credible dialog on the issues with other professionals and with society, and the creation of a new regional project within the Hatch system on animal ethics. A group of animal, dairy and poultry scientists have begun to meet to develop a proposal to create such a regional project. Hopefully, the project will attract participation not only from within the animal sciences community, but also philosophers, social scientists, veterinary scientists, etc.

*Steven L. Davis, PhD.*  
Department of Animal Sciences  
Oregon State University

### **ALF attacks laboratories at WSU and WWU**

The Avian Health Laboratory of Washington State University located in Puyallup, WA was raided by a group identifying themselves as the Animal Liberation Front on November 20 1999. The laboratory provided bird health surveillance, bird disease diagnosis, cause of death determinations, and public health and food safety quality control testing of eggs, egg products and poultry. Damage to the lab was estimated at tens of thousands of dollars.

The ALF also raided facilities at Western Washington University in October 1999, "liberating" 37 rats and four rabbits.

In a press release, the ALF said they are increasing the pressure on researchers to stop their outdated and barbaric torture of animals.

**TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY VETERINARY BIOETHICS SYMPOSIUM**

I had no idea what to expect of a veterinary bioethics symposium. As I got onto the plane that was to take me to Atlanta, Georgia, I tried not to imagine too much. Visions of strange mixes of undergraduate philosophy classes and business meetings came to mind. Chalkboards and business suits. Already I was pleased by the circumstances; I was being transported, fed and sheltered at someone else's expense. Very nice. Yet underneath all was the itching curiosity; what exactly goes on in regards to bioethics in veterinary medicine? Bioethics in medical practice on people is easy to find out about. Bioethics in veterinary medicine seems a little more elusive to the casual observer; however, contemplating its varied subjects is one of my personal favorite mental hobbies. I settled in for the flight anticipating rooms full of people who shared my enthusiasm and curiosity, and finally getting to the bottom of just how the profession deals with its ethical issues.

I was not disappointed. Not only were the lodgings very nice, but the place was full of very interesting, friendly people who all wanted to talk about veterinary bioethics. Delight! Students, professors, clinicians, philosophers—all gathered to think about bioethics. The first day of presentations was excellent. The speakers covered issues I had thought long and hard about and issues I had never known existed. Every speaker had a particular style, but each was effective in communicating what exactly the issue at hand to discuss was. Dr. Draper gave a particularly mind-opening presentation on the perils of the workplace for the unwitting practitioner. I had never previously considered what problems I would encounter once I become a practitioner, and found the experience very educational. All the presentations were very good, leaving me highly inspired. My only wish was that there was more time to discuss issues with the presenters. The schedule was very tight, and so beyond a few questions the speakers could not delve into the issues with the audience. Apparently, that is what meal time was for.

One very interesting portion of the symposium was dedicated to “break-out sessions” which began at the close of the first day and spilled over into the morning of the second day. I found the first day's session to be not particularly enjoyable, but educational in unanticipated ways. The session was an attempt to teach students (the students present had been gathered into an experimental unit at the front of the room while the rest of the audience watched) the basics of several different ethical theories and how to analyze an ethically challenging situation in a rational fashion. Dr. Comstock orchestrated the paper-passing and question-asking amongst the students while informing the others of how we were learning. I did not learn anything I was intended to learn, but I did learn that the pre- and post-tests seemed to particularly annoy several of my “classmates”, I strongly dislike being timed and reminded of it during the timed period, and that if cases are to be discussed and analyzed then adequate time should be given to do it justice. The second “break-out session” the following morning was much more productive in that aspect. Everyone was sent off in small mixed groups of students and others to meet with a specified coordinator who would present a case for analysis and discussion. I enjoyed this part thoroughly as it gave an opportunity to really discuss what the problem was, what were the ramifications of the problem, and what was the rational way to go about breaking it down to decide “what should I do?”—the root of all ethical ponderings. It was a real opportunity to listen to what other people had to say, learn new perspectives, and explore.

Another aspect of the symposium that I thoroughly enjoyed were the presentations on the infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiments, civil rights issues and Tuskegee history. During dinner the first night a very moving, insightful presentation on the history of the Tuskegee experiments and other debacles of research was given by Dr. Giselle Corbie-Smith. My only wish is that it had been either before or after dinner, as it deserved our undivided attention. She got it anyway, of that I am sure. A tour of the campus on the second day was very interesting and inspiring. Upon learning that the first students of Tuskegee spent the day building the campus buildings themselves and the evening studying, I could not help but be humbled and inspired. I only hope that I would be up to the challenge in a similar situation. That evening a presentation was given by lawyer Fred Gray, who fought many civil rights battles—not the least of which being a lawsuit against the government on behalf of the victims of the Tuskegee syphilis study. A very unique thing happened during his presentation; Charlie McCarthy spoke up and shared the fact that he had written the legislation that Mr. Gray had been fighting for.

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## CONFERENCE REPORT (CONTINUED)

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What an experience! To see them meet each other after so much time.

In sum, I cannot thank my benefactors enough for giving me the opportunity to attend the symposium, for I never could have afforded it myself and what it has given me is, well, quite beyond what I hoped for. I have returned to my classes inspired to start a student chapter of the SVME and to work towards having an ethics course become part of our curriculum. I have lots of ideas and I know that I have support from many different sources (I learned that while chatting during meal-time). I now know that I can indeed dedicate myself to my profession and the

pursuit of solutions to ethical dilemmas. I met so many absolutely incredible people—students, professors (one from my own school, who knew?!), clinicians and philosophers that all had so much to share. I left the symposium feeling that I had learned a great deal, that I had gained so much on many different levels some that have nothing to do with vet bioethics. At the bottom of it all, perhaps at the price of sounding dramatic, I am delighted to see that I can actually become the kind of doctor I would like to be, that that is a realistic goal. And I will have company.

*Elaine Dziuban*, UMC student

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS, MEETINGS, PROGRAMS

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**Student Grant Information:** Geraldine R. Dodge Summer Research Grant for Veterinary Students.

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation is awarding summer grants of up to \$7000 to as many as 30 students from North American Veterinary Schools.

The purpose of the grant is to enable students to step outside the traditional constraints of veterinary education to bring new and creative problem-solving perspectives to pressing animal-related issues.

Topics of research may be wide-ranging, including, but not limited to, companion animals, veterinary ethics, wildlife interactions.

Proposals must be postmarked no later than February 1, 2000.

Notifications of award will be mailed by the first week of April 2000.

Send proposals to:

David Grant, Executive Director  
Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation  
163 Madison Avenue, Box 1239  
Morristown, NJ 07962-1239

If you have any questions about the program, please e-mail Brett Anderson at: [vetinfo@grdodge.org](mailto:vetinfo@grdodge.org)

**AALAS Meeting:** The next American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS) meeting will be held in November 5-9, 2000 in San Diego, CA.

For more information you can visit the web site of the society:

[http://www.aalas.org/education/meetings/2000\\_NM/](http://www.aalas.org/education/meetings/2000_NM/)

### NEWSLETTER ON WWW

This issue of the *SVME Newsletter* is the second that will be available on the web site of the society. The newsletter is available at the new society web site:

<http://www.geocities.com/~amazondoc/SVME.html>

All future issues of the newsletter will also be posted on the web site. An announcement will be made on the VETETHIC list to inform you when each new issue is available.

Members who still wish to receive a hard copy of the newsletter may do so by contacting newsletter editor Sylvie Cloutier at [scloutie@vetmed.wsu.edu](mailto:scloutie@vetmed.wsu.edu).

## IN MEMORIUM

# Robert R. Shomer, V.M.D.

March 15, 1914 - October 15, 1999

In the 1984 book, *The Feisty Veterinarians of New Jersey*, author Ray Thompson opens the chapter entitled "The Debaters" with a full page picture of Bob Shomer and with the comment "Shomer pointed to the responsibility of veterinarians to minimize or eliminate pain and suffering in all animals...". Such was the commitment and dedication of the 1934 University of Pennsylvania graduate. Bob served the animal kingdom, the veterinary community and humankind with veracity, wit and passion.

During his 60 years in practice, and even into retirement, Bob participated in activities involving organized veterinary medicine, generously supported charitable causes and often served as the conscience of veterinary medicine in his native New Jersey and on the national level. He was elected Alternate Delegate to the AVMA in 1954 and then Delegate in 1964, where he served for more than 35 years. During that time, he also served as the President of the NJVMA and Secretary of the NJ State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners. His progressive thought was responsible for the introduction of a multitude of NJVMA Resolutions in the AVMA House of Delegates: Prohibition of smoking at the AVMA meeting (1974), the establishment of procedures and assistance for impaired veterinarians (1983), policy opposing harassment in the veterinary schools and workplace (1994), protection of endangered species (1967), establishment of plan for nuclear, bacterial and chemical warfare catastrophe (1982), the accreditation of schools for Animal Health Technology (1972), among others.

His generosity was legendary. In honor of his seventieth birthday and 50 years in practice, he endowed the NJ Veterinary Education Foundation, Bob Shomer Fund and continued to match every dollar donated to the fund. He also endowed a fund at the American Veterinary Medical Foundation. He raised funds for and donated to the development of the Israeli Guide Dogs for the Blind. He encouraged colleagues to assist destitute villages in Africa.

Again, the list goes on...

Bob was particularly passionate about the ethics of veterinary practice and thought. He served on the AVMA Judicial Council and was a co-founder of the *Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics*. He had the intellect of a learned man, the passion in the conviction of his beliefs and the eloquence to speak his mind.

For those of us fortunate enough to have known him, to learn from him and to have had him serve us as a mentor and teacher, colleague and friend, we should celebrate the blessing of having Bob in our midst. For those who did not personally enjoy the bond of friendship, you should celebrate the collegiality he shared with all veterinarians and the legacy he has provided by his example of commitment and support of his family, friends, and our profession and those creatures to whom he dedicated his career.

He will be missed but will always be remembered.

*“Bob served the animal kingdom, the veterinary community and humankind with veracity, wit and passion.”*

*Bob Gordon, DVM*