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Commentary

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Dr. Mark Allam offers Creme Fraiche a glass of champagne during the naming of the ICU's nursing station in honor of the horse.

It is difficult just now to speak coherently about my feelings for Mark and Lila. My thoughts and memories extend to things only partially understood and sadness overwhelms me. Perhaps, at some future time, it will be easier to say what is in my heart.

Many have already spoken on aspects of Mark's distinguished professional career, but I would like to touch on his contributions in terms of their global reach - how, during Mark's deanship, veterinary medicine at Penn changed the nature of veterinary medical education throughout the western world.

During those twenty-one years, Penn became the first veterinary school to move away from the traditional vocational mode of education. Mark believed that veterinary medicine is a branch of the medical sciences and that in order to serve agriculture best it must develop along biomedical pathways. He recognized that excellence requires preclinical departments staffed with faculty in the first ranks of their disciplines and that for basic scientists, the veterinary medical degree, while desirable, was of secondary importance. He recognized that school-wide excellence could only come if there is a genuinely close working relationship between preclinical and clinical departments and that for this purpose a common language is essential. This meant that clinical departments must hasten to develop specialization and to

foster scholarship. He recognized that a veterinary school has an unequaled opportunity to make contributions to biomedical science through the comparative approach and, during Mark's tenure, Penn became a great center for research in comparative medicine. He also believed that an inbred faculty could be a subtle poison for any institution and, during two decades, the entire world became the School's recruiting ground. In 1961, a revolutionary core-elective curriculum was put in place so that scholarship could be integrated into all aspects of veterinary medical education. At the same time, Penn became the first American veterinary school to admit women on an equal basis with men. And owing to the faculty's biological breadth and medical disciplines, the School began to enjoy a special place in the University, interacting in significant ways with the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine, with the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and with other Schools on campus.

These achievements changed the face of veterinary education and practice in the entire western world and have secured for Mark Allam a place as one of the 20th Century's monumental figures in veterinary medicine.

Robert R. Marshak, D.V.M.
Professor Emeritus, former Dean

Mark Allam was the first veterinarian to be elected to Fellowship in the College of Physicians. He served on the College's Council for many years and received the College's Outstanding Service Award in 1996.

Mark worked tirelessly on behalf of the College to forge connections between human and veterinary medicine. He utilized his knowledge of state government to work effectively with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg to secure resources to improve the utilization of the College's remarkable medical library as credible source of health information for the citizens of Pennsylvania. Those efforts are reflected in the new C. Everett Koop Community Health Information Center (Koop CHIC) at the College and in its other community services.

Mark remained an active and valued member of the College of Physicians and will be remembered fondly by college members, staff, family and friends for his personal guided tours of his beloved New Bolton facility and associated carriage rides around the premises.

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