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Commentary

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Quaker City Farmers and Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture

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It has been my good fortune to know and work with Mark Allam for 25 years. We first met when I joined the Quaker City Farmers, a group of Philadelphia agricultural enthusiasts, in 1973. A few years later he encouraged me to join, and sponsored my membership, in the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, a similar organization, but larger and tracing its origin back to 1785. Mark was a past president and board member of both organizations. His participation was legendary, "leader" would probably be a more accurate description of his relationship.

Over the years his optimism, encouragement, and guidance were inspirations for us all. He never saw roadblocks; he always knew how to get things done. He was responsible for organizing and placing the Philadelphia Society's priceless library of historical agricultural literature in the permanent care of the University of Pennsylvania, and for building funding for its upkeep.

Mark's wit and humor were refreshing. I remember once as I visited him in the hospital where he was recuperating from a broken shoulder or some other calamity, I asked him how he was being cared for. He replied "Abominably! They won't let me have my daily Martini!"

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Though Dr. Mark Allam's major contributions were in the field of veterinary medicine, he also was a wonderful colleague, supporter and collaborator in the School of Medicine and particularly in the Harrison Department of Surgical Research. Early in his career, he asked Dr. Ravdin's permission to attend surgical operations at the hospital of the University of Pennsylvania where he observed and learned aseptic technique. He also worked with us in the Harrison Department of Surgical Research which was situated in the School of Medicine and brought his vast knowledge and experience in veterinary medicine to help us maintain animals for the success of survival experiments. As time went on, he provided consultation in veterinary care either personally or through members of his faculty for most of the Medical School needs. Dr. Allam was remarkable, as others have noted, in his warm approach to people, his keen intellect, his enormous ability to meet all kinds of people and to work endlessly. In all of this, I recognize that he was constantly supported by his wonderful wife, Lila, whom we all came to love and appreciate. He entertained many of us at the New Bolton Center and often provided the most elegant transportation with horses and a carriage. Indeed, I

recall his coming over to the York Road area and driving one of our surgical colleagues and his new wife from the church where they were just married to their home several miles away.

Another phase of Mark Allam's life was his participation in The College of Physicians of Philadelphia. This is an old institution founded, I believe, in 1787, but since early in this century it has occupied a distinguished building at 19 South Twenty-Second Street. In addition to physicians, it has had as members a number of people from the basic sciences and from other sciences related to medicine. He not only became a member of this group, but was extremely valuable to it. His knowledge of politics and politicians and his contacts in Harrisburg were shared with The College of Physicians to procure annual appropriations from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I doubt that any other member of The College could have done this as successfully as he did. This support was vital to The College of Physicians and every member of it must be grateful to him for sharing his political sagacity, which he developed for the benefit of the Veterinary School, with The College of Physicians.

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State Representatives Joseph Pitts and Matthew Ryan, State Senator Noah Wenger, Dr. Allam.