

# William Arthur Hagan

*October 14, 1893 — February 1, 1963*

Professor Emeritus William Arthur Hagan died at the age of sixty-nine while on a plane traveling from New York to London. He was associated with Cornell University for over forty-six years as a graduate student, teacher, Dean, and Professor Emeritus. He retired from active service as Dean of the Veterinary College June 30, 1959, and became director of the National Animal Disease Laboratory at Ames, Iowa, a position that he held at the time of his death. His name is inextricably linked with the marked advancement of veterinary medicine during the past half-century.

Born at Fort Scott, Kansas on October 14, 1893, William Arthur Hagan received his preparatory education in Kansas schools and studied at Kansas State College, Manhattan, where he received the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 1915. He remained there for one year as an assistant in pathology and then came to Cornell in 1916 as an instructor in obstetrics. In 1917, he received the M.S. and was appointed instructor in pathology and bacteriology. He became Assistant Professor of Bacteriology in 1918 and Professor in 1919. In 1926, he was selected to head the Department of Pathology and Bacteriology. Then in 1932, at the age of thirty-eight he was made Dean of the Veterinary College just sixteen years after he arrived at Cornell.

In addition to his exceptional mental endowment, Dr. Hagan possessed abundant energy and a great capacity for work. Not only were his regular duties more than adequately performed, but he successfully dealt with many other commitments. He was an assistant in the Department of Animal Pathology of the Rockefeller Institute in 1921-1922. He was a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee and Council on Education 1938-1950. During the year 1943-1944 he was special assistant to Dr. A. W. Miller, United States Department of Agriculture. He served on the executive board of the American Veterinary Medical Association for five years and was chairman in 1944-1945. Following World War II, in 1945, he was appointed to membership on the United States Control Council in Germany, to aid in the rehabilitation of German veterinary colleges. In 1946-47, he was a member of the Secretary of Agriculture's Advisory Committee on Foot-and-Mouth Disease and contributed to the establishment of a United State Department of Agriculture center for research on this disease at Plum Island, New York. He was elected president of the American Veterinary Medical Association for 1947-1948. In 1947, Governor Dewey appointed him to the New York Food Commission to recommend measures "to meet the present critical situation with respect to food and proper nutrition." In 1949, he became a member of the executive committee of

the Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities. He served for many years as the United States member of the Permanent Committee of the International Veterinary Congresses. He was a delegate to the fifteenth International Veterinary Congress held at Stockholm in 1953 and Chairman of the United States Committee to the sixteenth International Veterinary Congress held in Madrid in 1959. In 1954, he was made Civilian National Veterinary Consultant to the Surgeon General of the United States. Two years later he was selected by the Secretary of Agriculture as Chairman of the Advisory Committee to Eradicate Brucellosis. In 1958 he headed a delegation of six veterinarians who visited the Soviet Union to study its livestock industry. During the following year he served as trustee of the Morris Animal Foundation, represented the American Veterinary Medical Association on the Ralston Purina Research Fellowship Awards Committee, and was elected vice president of the World Veterinary Association. He was also a member of many professional organizations.

His many activities, in addition to the administration of the New York State Veterinary College, did not occupy all of Dr. Hagan's time, for he achieved a notable record in research and writing. He published more than 126 scientific articles. He was a contributor to Stedman's *Medical Dictionary* and to numerous other professional books. He was author of the textbook, *The Infectious Diseases of Domestic Animals*, which appeared in 1943 and is now in its fourth edition. A co-author, D. W. Bruner, was enlisted beginning with the second edition.

The many accomplishments of Dr. Hagan did not go unrecognized, and numerous honors were awarded him. As early as 1925 the International Education Board designated him a European Fellow with the privilege of attending the Robert Koch Institute for Infectious Diseases in Berlin for one year. In 1938, he was granted the honorary degree, D.Sc., by Kansas State University. In 1941, he was presented with the Silver Beaver award, the highest mark of recognition in the scout movement, by the Louis Agassiz Fuertes Scout Council. In 1948 he was made Veterinarian of the Year on the basis of a nationwide poll conducted by Gaines Dog Research Center. Ten years later the New York State Veterinary Medical Association chose him as their Veterinarian of the Year. Honorary memberships were conferred upon him by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, Great Britain; the Royal Veterinary Society, Sweden; the Hellenic National Veterinary Society, Greece; and the Veterinary Academy, France. In 1959, he was cited by the New York State Conference Board of Farm Organizations for outstanding services to agriculture. He was the winner of the Twelfth International Veterinary Congress prize in 1960 and of the American Veterinary Medical Association annual award in 1962. The honorary degree, LL.D., was conferred on him by the University of Toronto in 1962. His name appears in *Who's Who in America*.

The modern veterinary buildings at Cornell are a testimonial to his foresight, planning, and efforts. As memorials to Dr. Hagan, the New York State Veterinary Alumni Association in 1960 established the Hagan Student Loan Fund at Cornell, and in 1962 the faculty meeting room in the Veterinary College was designated "The Hagan Room."

Dr. Hagan's reputation as an international figure in the field of veterinary education was based on solid ground. In the area of research he made important contributions to our knowledge of brucellosis and paratuberculosis. He was an excellent lecturer, writer, and teacher. He continued to teach a course in infectious diseases in the New York State Veterinary College until he retired. He was in constant demand everywhere as a lecturer and as an authority on all matters pertaining to veterinary medicine.

The interests of this truly educated man were not limited to veterinary medicine. He was amazingly well informed in many fields. Regardless of the demands on his time, he was never too busy to discuss any problem with a student, staff member, or with anyone else who wished his counsel. He possessed an engaging personality, a great love of life, a keen sense of humor, and an interest in everything. He had a large circle of friends who will forever miss him.

He married Esther Grace Lyon August 29, 1917, in Nickerson, Kansas. Their children are a son, William L. Hagan of Norwalk, Connecticut, and two daughters, Miss Janet Ann Hagan of New York City and Mrs. John L. Hyde of Southold, Long Island. Other survivors are five grandchildren; a brother, James S. Hagan of Los Altos, California; two nieces; and a nephew.

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