

Ellis Pierson Leonard

April 6, 1904 — February 7, 1991

Dr. Ellis Pierson Leonard's long distinguished career will forever leave deep impressions in the Veterinary College and throughout the veterinary profession. His early years began in Pleasant Plains, New Jersey. After obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree from Rutgers University in 1924, he entered Cornell University and completed a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in 1934. Following graduation, he joined the Small Animal Clinic staff at Kansas State University for two years. He then entered private practice in Summit, New Jersey, with Dr. Joseph B. Engle and served until 1948 when Dean William A. Hagan of Cornell University recruited him as department chairman and director of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital's Small Animal Clinic. He held this position until his retirement on July 1, 1969 when he was elected Professor Emeritus of Small Animal Surgery.

As director of the Small Animal Clinic, Dr. Leonard made extensive recommendations for the new construction of college facilities, including countless innovations in design which were later adopted by veterinary hospitals throughout the world. These included glass cages, heated outdoor runs, special drains, sterile surgical suites, as well as one of the first intensive care units for the critical care of animals. Visitors entering the small animal hospital were always impressed with the scrupulous cleanliness of the clinic and the meticulous care of patients his high standards required.

Dr. Leonard is credited with introducing and promoting aseptic surgical techniques to veterinary medicine. He was a pioneer in the surgical treatment of intervertebral disc diseases as well as a designer of orthopedic carts for patient rehabilitation. He developed innovative techniques for the internal fixation of fractures, especially repairs of the elbow, knee, and jaw. He pioneered the development of canine hip prostheses. He was also a superb soft tissue surgeon noted for his cardiac and intestinal surgery. Dr. Leonard was among the first to use oxygen for the management of animal patients under anesthesia. In 1955, he arranged for the first color television demonstration of surgical techniques at a veterinary college conference.

As author of two surgical textbooks, *Fundamentals of Small Animal Surgery* which was translated into five languages, and *Orthopedic Surgery of the Dog and Cat*, he influenced his whole profession. He was also a contributor to the first edition of *Canine Medicine and Artificial Insemination of Farm Animals*. Canine obstetrics was also a special interest, and in cooperation with A.E. Harrop of London, England, he conducted the first successful transatlantic artificial insemination in a dog.

Dr. Leonard remained professionally active in his retirement. He authored two historical books on the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, *A Cornell Heritage 1868-1908*, published in 1979, and *In the James Law Tradition 1908-1948*, published in 1982. In more recent years, he completed a history of the New York State Veterinary Medical Society entitled, *A Veterinary Centennial in New York State*.

Dr. Leonard received many professional honors. During his student days, he was awarded the Jane Miller Prize in Physiology in 1932, and the Ann Besse Prize in Medicine in 1934. He was cited in *Who's Who in America*. He received the American Animal Hospital Association Mark Morris Award in 1953. In 1986, he was given the prestigious Daniel E. Salmon Award by the Alumni Association of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University. He was a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association with Gold Star Status, American Animal Hospital Association, and a New York State Veterinary Medical Society Distinguished member. He served as secretary/treasurer and president of the Southern Tier Veterinary Medical Association, and as secretary/treasurer of the Alumni Association of the New York State College of Veterinary Medicine.

Professionally, he took great pride in being a founding Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons. He loved life, family, veterinary medicine, and Cornell.

In leisure time at home, he made use of his fine motor skills, and his artistic talents allowed him to make elegant miniature furniture for a special doll house prepared for his granddaughter. Months before the holiday season, he began work on wooden children's puzzles which he designed, made, and carefully painted with nontoxic paint.

During his twenty-one years as a professor emeritus, Dr. Leonard appeared weekly at the college in the morning, always dressed in a three-piece suit. He enjoyed sharing memories of past events as he made his rounds. In his suit coat pocket was a seemingly endless supply of hard candy known as "silver mints" which he presented to all he met. His devotion and commitment to Mrs. Leonard was particularly special.

During his life, "E.P." enjoyed other vastly different experiences from moving houses with a team of horses to working in a bank. Listening to Dr. Leonard's experiences was always intriguing and made one wonder how any one person could have such a diversity of talents. He gave a great deal during his life during which he had a positive influence on the lives of hundreds of young men and women. His legacy of honesty, fairness, and the work ethic is treasured by many. Indeed, he was a Cornellian of outstanding professional and personal attributes who will long be remembered fondly by his colleagues and by the students who benefitted wonderfully from his guidance and skills.

Dr. Leonard is survived by his wife, Alice Adele; and son, Jay Leeson.

Robert W. Kirk, George C. Poppensiek, Ronald C. Riis