

Emmett Norlin Bergman

May 6, 1929 — October 11, 1989

Emmett N. Bergman, professor of veterinary physiology, died October 11, 1989, in Tompkins Community Hospital, Ithaca, NY.

He grew up on a farm in southwestern Minnesota, the youngest of a family of eight brothers and one sister. After completing pre-veterinary studies at Worthington Junior College, Worthington, Minnesota, he earned a Doctorate in veterinary medicine and a Master of Science in veterinary physiology in a five-year combined degree program at the University of Minnesota. He spent two years in active duty at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC, then returned to the University of Minnesota as instructor in veterinary physiology. His early interest in metabolic diseases in ruminants begun as his doctoral thesis was maintained throughout his career. Appointment as assistant professor followed completion of the Ph.D. degree in 1959. He taught mammalian physiology to second-year veterinary medical students until 1961, when he joined the Department of Veterinary Physiology, New York State College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, as an associate professor. Full professorship followed in 1966.

His systematic, carefully controlled studies of metabolic disorders became recognized throughout the world. His laboratory attracted graduate students and postdoctoral fellows from the United Kingdom, the Union of South Africa, Israel, New Zealand and North America.

Over the years Emmett achieved an exceptionally harmonious balance between his two major professional activities, research and teaching. His clear, authoritative lectures to the veterinary medical students were revised each year to incorporate confirmed new knowledge of organ function that became parts of textbook chapters and review articles. His lecture preparation, together with illustrative material, required many hours. The laboratory exercises he devised and his personal commitment to their presentation were exemplary. Always softly spoken, he delivered his lectures at an even pace, well suited to his students. Concepts were presented in a clear, straightforward manner, easily understood by all. His lectures were occasionally interrupted by a humorous remark—so dry and smoothly integrated into his delivery that there was always a pause—a gentle laugh from Emmett, partly at his success in slipping in a little joke with the students hardly being aware—then general laughter as the students finally caught on. Few realized that he had earlier had a stutter, so successfully had he overcome the impediment.

His relationships with co-workers, whether in teaching or research, were marked by courtesy and concern. His preparation for any task was always timely and meticulously organized, reflecting his own conscientiousness. His colleagues admired him for his fairness and integrity, and found in him a staunch friend and dependable supporter.

Long-time service as referee for the *American Journal of Physiology*, the *Journal of Nutrition*, the *Journal of Dairy Science* and the *American Journal of Veterinary Research* reflected the high opinion of him held by his peers, as did his service on the Metabolism Study Section of the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland. He was much sought after as a speaker to address international audiences. He had been surprised and delighted to find his work translated by students into Asian languages. He was returning from a conference in Japan, and a lecture tour in China when his final illness overtook him.

Born into a large family, he was a devoted family man himself. He is survived by Mary, his wife of 36 years; three daughters, Margaret, Patty, and Susan; and a son, Emmett Jr. He was particularly proud of his four young grandchildren, Brandon Scott, Ryan Wyatt, Travis Piper and Caitlin Bergman Wentzel.

The career of Emmett Bergman spanned an unparalleled period of advancement in veterinary medicine; he will be long remembered by a grateful profession for his contributions to that advancement. A man of honor as a scientist and in private life, he is sorely missed by his family, his friends and colleagues. His many students, graduate and professional, to whom he was such a sound example, will remember him as a dedicated, approachable and effective mentor.

Alan Dobson, T. Richard Houpt, Alvin F. Sellers