



Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine

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Tribute: Dean Emeritus Donald F. Smith (1949-2016)

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Donald F. Smith, DVM, Austin O. Hooey Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), died Saturday, October 29, 2016 following a serious illness. He was 66 years old.

Dean Smith was the ninth dean of the college, serving from 1997 to 2007. A diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, he was considered a foremost authority on bovine surgery. His research on metabolic alkalosis in ruminants was instrumental in advancing the field of metabolic diseases of cattle.

“We are deeply saddened to hear of his passing,” said current Dean Lorin Warnick, citing Dean Smith’s “many accomplishments as a clinician, faculty member and leader in the college.

“I am personally grateful for the support and encouragement Don gave me since I was hired as a faculty member, and especially recently while I was serving as Interim Dean,” Warnick said.

As head of CVM, Dean Smith oversaw the completion of 40,000 square feet of additional clinical instruction and research space at the college, as well as a substantial addition to the James A. Baker Institute for Animal Health. Under his leadership the Cornell University Hospital for Animals expanded in terms of specialty services and caseload and the New York State Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory became a nationally-recognized regional center for bio-security related to animals and public health. Dean Smith led CVM through a reorganization in which academic departments were consolidated and renamed to reflect contemporary science and medicine. He also guided the development of a major comparative cancer program.

Steve Ettinger '62, DVM '64 described Dean Smith as “a very warm and engaging individual. He had a tremendous number of interests,” including the practice and history of veterinary medicine and helping students advance in their studies and, ultimately, in their careers. “He loved the college and the work he did there,” said Dr. Ettinger.

Dean Smith earned his DVM with distinction at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada in 1974 and completed an internship and residency in large animal surgery at the University of Pennsylvania. He first came to Cornell in 1977 as an assistant professor of surgery. He left for an associate professorship in large animal surgery at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, returning to Cornell in 1987 as Chair of the Department of Clinical Sciences. He also served as Associate Dean for Veterinary Education and Associate Dean for Academic Programs prior to becoming dean of the college.

“As a faculty surgeon Dr. Smith had uncanny abilities, especially when treating individual dairy cattle with surgical diseases,” said Susan Fubini, Professor of Large Animal Surgery and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. “His

command of the anatomy was extraordinary. Every time I operated with him I learned something new. He mentored many young faculty and residents, championed the role of women in the profession and encouraged leadership opportunities for female students, staff, and faculty.”

In the past year Dr. Smith co-authored a book, *Leaders of the Pack: Women and the Future of Veterinary Medicine* and *Pathways to Progress*, a history of American veterinary colleges and schools.

Calling hours are Friday, November 4 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. There will be a service of Christian worship and remembrance Saturday, November 5 at 11:00 a.m. Both will be held at Christ Chapel, 160 Graham Road, Ithaca. Those wishing to make memorial donations in Dean Smith’s name are asked to please consider the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, the Stroke Center at Cayuga Medical Center or Christ Chapel in Ithaca, NY.

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