



College News

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Cornell's Centennial Veterinarian



When Larry Waitz digs into his chocolate cake and ice cream on Monday, July 12, he will be reflecting upon a full century of life as a horseman, veterinarian, sailor, painter and family man. Dr. Waitz entered Cornell University's Veterinary College in 1927, when Veranus Moore, one of the original six faculty and the second dean of the college, was still active. Shortly after graduation, Waitz developed a large animal practice near his home in Hempstead, New York.

"I felt it was the center of the hub in Nassau County. You could go in many directions to make calls. I started off there in the Depression when men were selling apples on the street and, right from the beginning, I made a good living. I was so fortunate to be a veterinarian and have work in that area because there was a shortage of large animal veterinarians. I took care of about 18 commercial dairies, many stables of horses, and many private horses on estates and riding academies and that sort of thing. I enjoyed it very much."

Later in his career, Dr. Waitz transitioned into small animal work, moving to Southold near the eastern end of Long Island where he built the very successful North Fork Animal Hospital which exists to this day. During his retirement years, he lived in nearby Cutchogue, and became an avid sailor and accomplished painter. He and his wife, Anne, still live in the house on Skunk Lane that they have had since his retirement 45 years ago. His two daughters live nearby, and his son—a physician—lives in Phoenix, Arizona.

Dr. Waitz loves to reminisce about his experience at Cornell almost 80 years ago,

"I washed dishes at Cascadilla Hall. You'd get dinner and 35 cents for working there, and I got my money's worth by eating plenty. I can remember going home in the middle of the evening, walking across the campus and hearing those beautiful chimes. It was such a beautiful place, and the professors were always so friendly and helpful. All my impressions of Cornell were wonderful."

Dr. Waitz is not only Cornell's oldest surviving veterinarian, but he also received his DVM degree earlier than any other living veterinarian in the United States. When he graduated in 1931, dairy cattle were still being housed and milked in multi-level converted multilevel warehouses in Queens. Long Island was still a rural landscape with numerous dairy farms, hog operations, and riding stables. Milk contaminated with the tuberculosis organism was still occasionally being sold for

human consumption and small animal surgical procedures were becoming more commonplace because of improving anesthetic techniques. Penicillin, however, was still fifteen years into the future.

A biography and audio interview with Dr. Waitz is available at www.vet.cornell.edu/library/legacy/.