



Robert Miller Lewis

May 20, 1937 – August 18, 2011

Dr. Robert Lewis was born in Flushing, NY and attended Grant high school in Portland, OR. His professional training was at Washington State University where he graduated Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 1961. Bob had married Sandra Jane Shurleff in 1958 and they relocated to the Boston area where the first 15 years of Bob's professional career were spent. He attended the Angell Memorial Animal Hospital as a resident in anatomic pathology under the legendary TC Jones. Bob duly obtained board certification from the American College of Veterinary Pathologists; soon followed a long and productive career of laboratory research in comparative medicine in the rich biomedical environment of central New England, focusing on spontaneous autoimmune disorders in domestic animals.

Bob joined the Pathology departments at Angell and Tufts-New England Medical Center - his belief in one medicine was alive and well. Human disorders such as lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, Sjogren's syndrome and other related conditions were thought not to afflict animals but through careful investigation Dr. Lewis showed for the first time that such maladies did occur in animals also (particularly dogs). These disorders were documented and the potential role of viruses in lupus was uncovered, work of great excitement and potential. Important collaborations were established with Dr. Robert Schwarz, Dr. Fred Quimby and others.

A new challenge presented itself and in 1975, Dr. and Mrs. Lewis moved from Boston to Ithaca, NY and Cornell University where Bob had accepted the position of chair of the Department of Pathology at the College of Veterinary Medicine. He considerably expanded the department, bringing in veterinary pathologists with expertise in a variety of areas that have gone on to become leaders in their fields and formalized residency training and graduate studies such that veterinary pathology at Cornell came to take a pre-eminent position nationally and internationally, a standing it retains to this day.

Over the following 25 years, Bob taught in the professional DVM curriculum, shared service in surgical pathology and necropsy with the other pathologists, contributed to graduate courses, mentored Ph.D. students and managed the department in a style that was uniquely his own. He

particularly enjoyed his role as a teacher, advising veterinary students and residents. The theme of his early investigative endeavors – autoimmune diseases - continued with work on spontaneous renal and skin conditions (glomerulonephritis and pemphigus). His laboratory was a rich environment in which many residents, Ph.D. students, and visiting scientists cut their teeth in laboratory methodology. He coauthored a handbook of Veterinary Clinical Immunology which well reflected the range of his interests, reaching from basic immunology to clinical medicine. He worked hard and played hard, invariably to be found at Cape Cod over the summer with Sandy and their children Jon and Karin. Fishing from the “Mongrel,” accompanied by friends old and new and professional colleagues was the favored occupation and while during the academic year many social events were enjoyed at the Lewis home on Sunny Slope Road.

Dr. Lewis stepped down as chair after a decade but remained as a member of the department until retirement in 2000. Bob and Sandy relocated to Kentucky with Karin and her husband until Sandy’s untimely death. Bob spent the last years at the family home at Barnstable Village on the cape, dying in August 2011 after a long illness.

Donald Schlafer, Chairperson; Barry Cooper, Brian Summers