

Arthur Gordon Danks

December 10, 1906 — July 1, 1989

Born to a farm family at Allamuchy, New Jersey, Gordon Danks had an early introduction into the field of animal care. His father was a widely known breeder and judge of dairy cattle and sheep. It is therefore quite understandable why Gordon would select veterinary medicine as his lifetime pursuit. This choice was strengthened by his admiration of Dr. Neil Gordon Darby, the farm veterinarian.

His secondary training was obtained at Blair Academy, Blairstown, New Jersey, after which he acquired a B.S. degree at Pennsylvania State College in 1929. He interrupted his education during the year 1926-27 to lease and operate a 100-acre dairy farm in northern New Jersey. This confirmed his desire to obtain a veterinary degree.

He entered Cornell in 1929 and, because of his advance training, was able to finish his course work in three and one half years. During this time he served as student assistant in physiology and helped in two other departments from time to time. Since his classroom obligations were completed in midterm, he was permitted to assist in the Small Animal Clinic during the second semester of his final year. He was awarded the D.V.M. degree in June, 1933.

Upon graduation he spent a year in general practice at Allamuchy, New Jersey. In 1934 he obtained an appointment as instructor in the Department of Surgery and Medicine at Kansas State College, Manhattan, Kansas.

It was in Kansas that he met and married Bernice Sutherland. To this happy union in due time were added four children. They are Mrs. Gary Homer (Marguerite), Gordon Sutherland, Edward Robert and Paul Douglas.

Dr. Danks remained at Kansas State until July 1936 when he accepted an appointment as instructor in Large Animal Surgery at Cornell. From 1936 to 1948 he rose through the ranks to a full professorship. In addition to his clinical and teaching duties he became active in the affairs of the *Cornell Veterinarian*, a unique veterinary publication with world-wide circulation.

With the January issue of 1938, he became the assistant editor to Dr. D.H. Udall. When Dr. Udall resigned in 1939, Danks took over the editorship. At that time he was the youngest editor of a major veterinary publication in this country. He held this position until 1942 when the pressure of clinical teaching forced him to relinquish it. World War II was in progress, the curriculum had been accelerated, and Dr. Frost was on sabbatic leave. Danks was the only person of faculty rank in the department and his schedule was tight in order to meet all his commitments. In the autumn of 1942 he published a new revised edition of Williams's *Surgical and Obstetrical Operations*.

In 1948 he left Cornell to become the director of the Department of Surgery and Medicine at the University of Illinois at Urbana, Illinois. He was disappointed with his choice, and after a brief period moved to the University of Pennsylvania as professor of animal husbandry and manager of the New Bolton Farm at the School of Veterinary Medicine.

His return to Cornell in 1950 occurred shortly after the death of Dr. J.N. Frost. For the next twelve years he served as professor and head of the Department of Veterinary Surgery and director of the Large Animal Clinic. During that time he was forced to abandon his surgical activities because of a physical disability.

He was appointed the first director of College's Student Administration in 1962 and remained in that position until he retired in 1970. He was granted emeritus status that same year.

Gordon Danks's contributions to veterinary medicine covered a broad spectrum. His written offerings were sound and concise, and were primarily in the field of clinical veterinary surgery. He was a good teacher and instilled professional discipline in his students. His services were widely sought for programs of veterinary organizations throughout the country, and he received many attractive offers from other colleges including the deanship at one veterinary college. He served the American Veterinary Medical Association as a member of the Research Council and as a trustee on the Group Insurance Trust. The A.V.M.A. awarded him Gold Star membership. At the state level, he was president of the New York State Veterinary Medical Society in 1973 and elected a distinguished member in 1981. He was also voted "Veterinarian of the Year" by the State Society in 1964.

The Southern Tier Veterinary Medical Association elected him president in 1967, and in 1976 the New York State Agricultural Society awarded him a distinguished service citation.

His fraternal affiliations included Alpha Zeta, Gamma Sigma Delta, Phi Zeta, Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Xi, and Alpha Psi. Gordon had a wide acquaintance with veterinarians across the country and visited with many of them during trips that he made after retirement. His was an encyclopedic knowledge concerning the veterinary graduates from Cornell, and many questions about our alumni were referred to him.

During his active years he often served as a consultant to the dean, especially during the construction of the east campus and during the establishment of the student administration service. For his distinguished alumni service he was presented the Daniel Elmer Salmon Award in 1986. In his declining years, his veterinary activities were severely curtailed, but in spite of the long illness his interest remained, as illustrated by his attendance at the alumni breakfast in June, 1989.