

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

Franklin M. Loew, DVM '65: Visionary and Builder in Massachusetts

By Dr. Donald F. Smith
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Tufts University president, Jean Mayer's revolutionary idea to establish a veterinary school with a One Health mission became a reality in 1978 when he appointed Ontario Veterinary College graduate, Albert Jonas, as the inaugural dean.



Franklin Martin Loew, DVM, Class of 1965 Cornell University
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Franklin M. Loew, DVM '65 (1939-2003) was appointed the second dean of the college in 1882 and became the recognized builder of veterinary medicine at Tufts. Realizing that he could not immediately assemble people and programs for a mega-college like those at the University of Pennsylvania or his *alma mater*, Cornell, he aspired instead to develop distinctive signature

programs of high quality in areas that would represent future priorities for the veterinary profession.

“Five programs,” Loew would opine, “five good programs. They don’t have to be large, but they must be of the highest standards and they must embody compassion for both humans and animals. And they must be marketed.” Over the next few years, signature programs emerged in biotechnology, equine sports medicine, wildlife medicine, ethics and values, and international veterinary medicine. And he did market them.¹

The school soon left its shared base with the medical school in Boston, and was established in North Grafton, a short commute to the major medical facilities and biomedical research centers in Boston and Cambridge. The opening of the Henry and Lois Foster Hospital for Small Animals in 1985 was a major milestone in the early life of the school. A wildlife clinic, the first such free-standing clinic in the country, was also established on campus. Meanwhile, the Tufts Ambulatory Service, providing food supply and equine veterinary services was located in Woodstock, Connecticut.

By the time Loew left in 1995 to become dean at Cornell, Tufts Veterinary College (as it was called then) had established progressive academic and research programs and high-quality clinical care services. They had launched the Master program in Animals and Public Policy that addressed the role of animals in society and policy implications for their welfare. Scientific advances included Susan Cotter’s research critical to creation of diagnostic tools and vaccination for feline leukemia (FeLV) retrovirus. On the international front, a heat-resistant vaccine was modified against the deadly cattle plague, rinderpest, and a novel approach, population-based disease surveillance, developed for distribution and use. Endorsed by the Pan-African Rinderpest Campaign this vaccine eventually contributed to the global eradication of rinderpest, the first such animal disease eradication.

Of the nine veterinary colleges that developed during this period, Tufts is the only one not a part of the land grant system. Because of this, private support and entrepreneurial strategies represent high priorities for the School. Frank Loew was a master at building and sustaining relationships and he left for his successor, Phil Kosch, the challenge and opportunity to continue to move beyond the “dandiest little vet school in the country”.

Today, under the leadership of Dean Deborah Kochevar, what is now called Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University embraces and broadens Mayer’s strategic directive and continues to advance global One Health initiatives that improve the health and well-being of animals, humans and the environment. With its high-impact programs in science and medicine, its 80,000 per year case load, and the influence of its faculty and alumni across the globe, it is not just a premier veterinary program in North American, but one of the most distinctive in the world.

¹ Smith, Donald F. 150th Anniversary of Veterinary Education and the Profession in the North America: Part 3, 1970-2000. JVME 38(3), 2011

KEYWORDS:

Tufts University
Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine
Jean Mayer
Franklin M. Loew
Deborah Kochevar
One Health

TOPIC:

Colleges of Veterinary Medicine

LEADING QUESTION:

Which 1970s veterinary school had the vision of One Health?

META-SUMMARY:

Dean Frank Loew was the builder of veterinary medicine at Tufts University.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Donald F. Smith, Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, had a passion for the value of the history of veterinary medicine as a gateway for understanding the present and the future of the profession.

Throughout his many professional roles from professor of surgery, to Department Chair of Clinical Sciences, Associate Dean of Education and of Academic Programs and Dean, he spearheaded changes in curriculum, clinical services, diagnostic services and more. He was a diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons and a member of the National Academy of Practices. Most recently he played a major role in increasing the role of women in veterinary leadership.

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine is one of his projects where he was able to share his vast knowledge of the profession.