

## CORNELL CHRONICLE

# World-renowned vet Robert Kirk dies at 88

By Susan S. Lang | January 24, 2011

Robert W. Kirk, D.V.M. '46, author of the well-known text "Current Veterinary Therapy," died Jan. 19 at Kendal at Ithaca. He was 88.

### MEDIA CONTACT

**Joe Schwartz**

[bjs54@cornell.edu](mailto:bjs54@cornell.edu) (mailto:bjs54@cornell.edu)

☎ 607-882-3774 (tel:607-882-3774)

A faculty member of the College of Veterinary Medicine from 1952 to 1985, Kirk served as director of the Cornell University Hospital for Animals in the late 1970s and 1980s. He was active in transforming veterinary medicine from "farm doctoring" to the profession it is today with its contributions to community and human health. One of his greatest professional interests was strengthening the connections between veterinary research and practice.

"When he retired in 1985, he was one of the most decorated and widely known small animal veterinarians in the world," said Donald Smith, dean emeritus at Cornell. "Dr. Kirk had an enormous impact on the development of small animal medicine. He was a founding member of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and also the specialty of veterinary dermatology. His students and residents populated some of the most important university hospitals and private practices in the country."

Kirk's book, "Current Veterinary Therapy," which he edited himself through its first 10 editions and which is now in its 13th edition, has sold nearly 300,000 copies and has been translated into many languages. He was also the co-author of "Small Animal Dermatology" and "The Handbook of Veterinary Procedures and Emergency Treatment."

Among his many activities was service for 21 years to the Seeing Eye Foundation, which dedicated the Robert W. Kirk Canine Health Library in his honor in 1997. He was also an avid hunter, fisherman and traveler.

Born May 20, 1922, in Stamford, Conn., Kirk was a member of the Army Specialized Training Program during World War II and also served as a first lieutenant with the Air Force. He earned his B.A. in 1943 at the University of Connecticut at Storrs, where he studied agriculture, planning to be a dairy farmer; and his D.V.M. at Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine in 1946.

Kirk was predeceased by his wife, Helen, and is survived by three daughters and an extended family. Services were held Jan. 23 at the First Congregational Church of Ithaca. Memorial donations can be sent to the Robert W. Kirk Practitioner-in-Residence Program, Office of Alumni Affairs and Development, Box 39, College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

### STORY CONTACTS

**Susan S. Lang**

[ssl4@cornell.edu](mailto:ssl4@cornell.edu) (mailto:ssl4@cornell.edu)

📞 607-255-3613 (tel:607-255-3613)