



7-1-1995

Dr. Detweiler Honored

Dr. Detweiler Honored



The School of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania recently honored Dr. David K. Detweiler, Professor Emeritus of Physiology and Animal Biology, by presenting to him the Centennial Medal. Following is the citation:

David Kenneth Detweiler, distinguished cardiovascular physiologist, research scientist, educator, and Father of Veterinary Cardiology, your colleagues and your school salute you.

Graduating from the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine with academic distinction in 1942, you immediately joined the faculty, at a time when the School was at low ebb in financial support and faculty size, and early on you assumed a demanding administrative and teaching role as acting Head of Physiology and Pharmacology.

Despite teaching responsibilities that today would be considered inconsistent with any other academic activity, you found the time to initiate research in comparative cardiology, laying the groundwork for what was to become an entirely new area of specialization in veterinary medicine. Reading widely and making contact with cardiologists in human medicine, you recognized the potential for applying principles of cardiovascular physiology to the diagnosis of heart disease in animals. Acquiring electrocardiographic and other equipment wherever you could, you soon

began to spend time in the clinics, examining and treating animals with signs suggestive of heart disease; you published the first descriptions of the clinical and pathologic signs of a number of forms of heart disease in dogs and horses. In 1957, you convinced the National Institutes of Health to fund a study of the epidemiology of cardiovascular disease in dogs, the first such study ever conducted in animals. This work provided detailed descriptions of the frequency and types of heart disease in dogs and led in 1960 to a large program project grant under which you established the Comparative Cardiovascular Studies Unit. Dealing broadly with basic cardiovascular hemodynamics and electrophysiology as well as heart disease, the Cardiovascular Studies Unit, under your direction, allowed the School to attract a number of faculty members who have contributed in major ways over the years to the teaching and research missions of the School, and trained a generation of veterinary cardiologists who aided in the development of comparative cardiology in the United States and abroad.

During this extraordinary period of development, sparked by your imagination and energetic pursuit of education and research in comparative cardiology, the school established the first residency in veterinary cardiology as well as offering other traineeships in cardiovascular research. The young veterinarians trained

in these programs led the way to Board Certification in Veterinary Cardiology.

Not content simply to pursue research and to train others in your own field of cardiovascular physiology and cardiology, in the 1950's you established and chaired a graduate group for the Veterinary School within Penn's Graduate School of Medicine. This widened the scope of graduate-level education within the school and provided formal training and research opportunities in the School of Veterinary Medicine and the School of Medicine for veterinarians interested in a variety of specialized fields of medical science, including cardiology, neurology, ophthalmology, and internal medicine. These programs played a major role in accelerating clinical specialization and research in comparative medicine at Penn, developments that made Penn the pioneer institution and world center for these activities. As its chairman for over 30 years, you nourished and sustained the original Graduate Group and, as the tides of graduate education changed, successfully converted it to what is now called Graduate Group in Comparative Medical Sciences in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

During your distinguished career, Dave Detweiler, you have received many awards, including honorary doctorates from veterinary schools in the United States and Europe, and election to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. Today, your own school invites you to accept the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School Centennial Medal. Conceived by the award committee you chaired in 1984 at the time of celebration of the School's one-hundredth year, it is a unique award in veterinary medicine, originally designed to symbolize Penn's recognition of the most outstanding leaders in veterinary medicine outside the school. This idea, to recognize others outside our own halls, is consistent with your tendency to think generously and in the widest context. Today, in bestowing the Centennial Medal, we recognize you not only as one of the most seminal figures in the history of our profession, but as one of our own — one of the most talented and productive scientists, educators, and academic statesmen in the 110-year history of this school.