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## The Most Successful Dean of Any Veterinary School in the 20th Century

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**D**r. Mark W. Allam, who served as dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine from 1953 until 1973, died on April 28 at the age of 89 at his home in Swarthmore, PA.

Dr. Allam grew up on a farm outside of Philadelphia and, enrolling in the School of Veterinary Medicine directly from high



school in 1928, he graduated from Penn's School of Veterinary Medicine in 1932. He opened a practice in Media, PA, where he treated companion animals and made calls to dairy and horse farms. While in practice, he arranged to further study surgery at Penn's School of Medicine and was introduced to the principle of aseptic

surgery which he promptly instituted in his own practice.

In 1945 Dr. Allam joined the School of Veterinary Medicine faculty to teach surgery. He insisted on aseptic surgery there, and the technique soon spread throughout veterinary medicine. Seven years later, in 1952, he was appointed interim dean and then in 1953, dean. "During the 21 years he was in the dean's office the School rose to the pinnacle of veterinary medicine," said the present Dean Alan Kelly. "He was probably the most successful dean of any veterinary school in the 20th century. We all owe him an enormous debt of gratitude for his leadership, and we deeply mourn his loss."

Dean Allam was the driving force for the establishment of New Bolton Center, the school's large animal facility in Kennett Square, PA. The West Philadelphia hospital provided limited space for the treatment of horses and cattle and a larger, rural campus was needed.

Under his leadership, New Bolton Center developed into one of the leading equine clinics in the nation. Dr. Allam's legendary fund-raising skills secured contributions from horse breeders and owners that made the superb clinic and research facilities of New Bolton a reality. He obtained funding for the first endowed

professorship at a school of veterinary medicine anywhere. Dr. Allam also applied these skills in Harrisburg where he was able to secure much-needed support for the school from the Commonwealth.

At the Philadelphia campus, Dr. Allam increased the faculty and focused on basic and clinical research, laying the

foundation for the outstanding research reputation of the school that is part of its consistent rating as number one in the nation. Dr. Allam recognized the importance of establishing a formalized Ph.D. program at the school and he was instrumental in the development of veterinary medical specialties.

He was a founding member of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, and served as chairman of the board of regents in 1966-67; an annual lecture in his honor has been delivered at the association's meeting since 1972. Dr. Allam served as vice president of the American Veterinary Medical Association in 1956 and was a member of the board of directors from 1963 until 1967. The organization honored him with the AVMA Award in 1969. His other honors include the Bronze Medal from the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture in 1971; Man of the Year by the Quaker City Farmers in 1977; and Honorary Associate of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. In 1984 he received Penn's honorary degree at a special convocation for the Centennial of the School.

After his retirement from the deanship, Dr. Allam served for four years as assistant vice president for health affairs at the University.

Dr. Allam was a familiar figure at the Devon Horse Show, the American Gold Cup and at other equine events. He enjoyed carriage driving and was until recently a familiar sight at New Bolton Center, with bowler and driving apron, high on the seat of a carriage. Dr. Allam and his late wife, Lila, spent much time and effort in restoring the manor house at the rural campus, named in their honor, making it the centerpiece of New Bolton Center buildings.

The family have asked in lieu of flowers contributions to Allam House, c/o the School of Veterinary Medicine, 3800 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

Dr. Allam is survived by two daughters, Shelley A. Rosato of Elverson, PA and Maryjane A. Downey of Newark, DE, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren, a sister, Dorothy Allam of Lima, PA and a brother, Robert Allam of Wallingford, PA.

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