



## Bellwether Magazine

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### Commentary

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Veterinary medicine has been slow to celebrate its heroes. If there was ever a star to celebrate in the 20th century it was Mark Allam; here is a truly remarkable man who pioneered a revolution in veterinary education and clinical practice throughout the world. His 21 years in the dean's office was the most important period for the School this century; he propelled the School upward to the pinnacle of veterinary medicine and established it as an internationally renowned institution. Part of Mark's success came from his astonishing talent for raising funds from the private sector but Mark Allam touched peoples' lives in many many ways and we must ensure that his numerous contributions are recorded and acclaimed.

Mark prevailed because he thoroughly enjoyed life and put all of his remarkable energy and talent into what he was doing. He loved people, he loved animals and he was intensely concerned with the



*Mrs. Elizabeth Moran, Dean Kelly and Mrs. Lila Allam at the 1997 American Gold Cup festivities.*

well being of both, these are the ingredients that made him such a great veterinarian. One of his hallmarks was his optimism; I never knew anyone who was so unflinchingly cheerful and encouraging; he never saw any barriers he couldn't overcome, and if there was ever the slightest doubt his favorite Martini soon dispelled it. More than anything else however, Mark was totally dedicated to the School and believed implicitly that what he was doing was right. He embodied the saying that "if you want something badly enough and believe in it deeply enough – it will happen." And happen it did, New Bolton Center was built, the Widener Hospital, Alaryk Myrin Building, Georgia and Philip Hofmann Center, C. Mahlon Kline Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Center, the Dormitory and Alumni Hall were all constructed at NBC, Allam House became an elegant manor and the Gladys Hall Rosenthal Building went up in Philadelphia.

When Mark came into the dean's office, the School was in dire straits; for example, the total research budget of the School in 1952 was \$35,000, when he stepped down in 1973 it had mushroomed to \$2,860,000, an eighty fold increase in research support. At about that time, the School had more research support from the National Institute of Health than sixty percent of medical schools in

the US. Veterinary clinical specialization was pioneered at Penn under Mark's leadership and was starting to spread throughout the nation; and with it came an immense advance in the clinical care of animals. Mark played an additional role in this development as he was a superb surgeon and became the founding father of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons. The annual Mark W. Allam Lecture recognizes his contribution to the College.

The breadth of Mark's accomplishment is astonishing. Not only was he Dean of the School for 21 years, he was Chair of the Media School Board for 16 years, he was skilled at carriage driving and a celebrity at the Devon Horse Show, and he held numerous other prestigious positions in local and national organizations. As if this was not enough, he used his spare time to become an expert cabinet maker and crafted several fine pieces of furniture.

My wife, Susan, and I cherish the rare privilege of knowing Mark and Lila Allam, they were a devoted couple. There was a beauty in the love they had for one another and although we mourn the loss of both of them, they need to be together.

Alan M. Kelly  
*The Gilbert S. Kahn Dean  
of Veterinary Medicine*

The entire University community was deeply saddened to learn of Dr. Allam's passing. He was an exceptional man, and, as the words in this special issue of *Bellwether* so clearly show, very dear to the hearts of so many.

His many accomplishments took Penn and the School of Veterinary Medicine to new and lofty heights; he stands as one of the intellectual greats of this University. We mourn his loss and are proud to have called him our own.

We mourn, too, for the passing of Lila Allam, Mark's beloved and devoted wife. Lila and Mark were extraordinary gifts to us, and we will remember them always.

Judith Rodin  
*President  
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