



## Bellwether Magazine

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### Commentary

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**W**hen I came to the School in July of 1964, Mark Allam was dean and Bob Marshak was department chairman. It was an exciting time for all of us caught up in the growth of New Bolton Center, the development of the new large animal hospital, and in the advancement of veterinary medicine to the level of being an equal partner with the other medical professions. There was never any doubt about who was in charge, but individual initiative and bold departures from past established policies and treatments were encouraged and usually approved with a nod of the head. Mark had a vision of what veterinary medicine could and should be and he had been laying the foundation for it in the years before I joined the faculty. My role was also clear; conceive the ideas and Mark would find a way, by hook or by crook, to pay for their implementation. Anything was possible, but we had to pull together with all of our collective energy to make the changes and see them

through to success, modification, or failure. And, yes, failure was an acceptable outcome, so long as we tried our very best along the way. We knew Mark trusted and respected each of us, and while we might disappoint him, and he was sure to tell us so in no uncertain terms, he never lost faith in us. We all knew where we were headed; to take the giant step to make our School the very best in the world.

Mark enlisted us in his never-ending fund raising programs. On many dark, cold, winter evenings the two of us would head out to make a "fund raising" presentation at a pony club meeting somewhere in the tri-state area. Our audience was typically composed of teenagers, along with a smattering of some who hadn't yet reached that point in life. We would leave apparently empty-handed. While driving home one evening I asked, "Dr. Allam, why do we spend so much of our time speaking at pony club meetings?" Mark's response rings loud

and clear in my memory, as if it was last night, not 30 years ago. Without hesitation he said, "always remember Bill, they grow up, you know."

On another occasion in the 1980's, I was flying home after a speaking engagement and sitting next to me was a man who lived in Media, PA. He asked if I knew Dr. Allam. He related that Dr. Allam had cared for his cat (in the 1940's) and on repeated occasions Dr. Allam had urged him to donate to the School but he never had. To my amazement the man opened his wallet and handed me \$100 cash. He said, "over the years, every time I saw Dr. Allam in the news I felt guilty that I had not donated. Please give this donation to Dr. Allam and tell him better late than never." I passed on the donation and after I related my story, Dr. Allam finished by telling me he remembered the donor, he knew that someday his client would come through with a donation, and to top it off, he told me the name of the cat!

The finest honor that I have received during my career has been to be named the first Mark Whittier and Lila Griswold Allam Professor of Surgery. The chair was made possible through the generosity of Mrs. Betty Moran. She insisted on the chair being named after Mark and Lila because of her long-standing affection for them. As a surgeon, Mark was very proud of this honor bestowed on him and Lila. They were a true partnership and certainly much of the credit for the success of the School rests in Lila's gentle, caring, undaunted support for Mark and the School. They both will be missed, but I know with complete certainty that they were justly proud and satisfied with their life's work and accomplishments.

William J. Donawick, D.V.M.  
*Mark Whittier and Lila Griswold Allam  
Professor of Surgery*

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on the sidewalk and then made an abrupt stop causing the trooper, with his arms and sword in the air, to part company with his horse. Poor guy! The entire event was certainly colorful and spectacular. All the dignitaries were delivered in style, and we went on our way to van home. Mark told about another amusing incident to this story. The committee had found a vacant area, along side of a railroad yard, for us to unload horses from our vans. However, this was where the trains shifted railroad cars from one train to another. Well, the slamming and hooking of railroad cars was quite noisy! That really upset our country horses just off the farm for a visit to the city, so it was an experience to remember.

Mark has done many eventful and interesting things in his life. By sharing and participating in those wonderful experiences with others, he has also transformed the carrying world into a memorable one for numerous people. We salute Mark and thank him for these cherished memories.

Mark and Lila will not be forgotten!

**W**hen Mark first came to Penn I was an instructor in surgery. Mark pioneered the advent of modern aseptic surgery from the age-old antiseptic methods at the veterinary school. He was a man of great energy, both light and serious in his manner. The great things he accomplished speak for his determination. My older brother, a physician in the Chicago area, on watching Mark in surgery remarked that his skills were on a par with any of his colleagues. Previous deans of the school all had a wall or barrier surrounding them. Mark's door was always open. We frequently had lunch together at a small coffee shop down the street. Once he invited me to share lunch in the dean's office. He opened his brief case and took out two sandwiches and two apples, most likely prepared by Lila, and offered me one of each.

Mark Allam was a great friend to his students and to his colleagues. He had a warm feeling for us as we had for him. He will be missed.

Harold M.S. Smith, V.M.D., '43

Clarkson Addis, Jr., M.D.