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A Remembrance of Mark and Lila Allam

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I have known Mark Allam since entering veterinary school in 1956, and, over the more than 40 years since then, have interacted with him in many capacities. Initially, Mark was my professor in surgery courses and later in clinics. He was one of the finest surgeons I have ever seen operate. He was knowledgeable, thorough, and, most of all, gifted with extraordinary hand dexterity. It was a pleasure and an unusually educational experience to assist Mark at surgery. He always executed precisely the correct manipulative maneuver, all-the-while explaining in anatomical and surgical terms the reason for each procedure. In addition, the etiology, pathogenesis, and prognosis of the condition were appropriately analyzed. And in the end, one received instructions on the concerns the owner/client might have and how these should be addressed. It was a truly educational experience — academically, professionally, and most of all, in the thoughtful, kind treatment of animals.

Later, I came to know Mark as a member of the faculty, and my wife, Elaine, met Lila in the faculty wives' group. Mark and Lila shared a kindness and warmth toward people that was immediately recognized on meeting them, and an enthusiasm for the School that inspired all those they encountered. They were true leaders, and the support they gave to each other resulted in a great strength from which we all benefitted.

During my years as a faculty member, I came to recognize many extraordinary qualities in Mark. Perhaps chief among these positive attributes was an incredible ability to make the right decision at major crossroads and in key areas. Thus, in the early 1950s, before anyone else, he saw that veterinary medicine must establish a firm research base among its faculty and develop clinical specialties to deliver first-class care to our patients. He embarked on the crusade toward these twin goals selecting a cadre of talented leaders to guide the School into a new, bright, competitive future. We owe our present stature in medicine and society to that vision of Mark's, to the never-ending support of Lila, and to his cadre of excellent lieutenants.

Of all the things that Mark and Lila achieved and gave to us perhaps the greatest, certainly professionally, was the implementation of this dream for the future. Many have a vision, but greatness belongs to those that by strength of belief, excellence of ability, and sheer perseverance bring that vision to fruition. Mark and Lila did this, and now in veterinary medicine we live that vision, and it is our responsibility to preserve, strengthen, and enrich this vision into the future. For in their belief, Mark and Lila not only built a school, they changed a profession. Veterinary medicine as it moves into the 21st century, travels on the trail that was envisioned and marked by Mark and Lila beginning nearly 50 years ago. We have been truly fortunate to have known them, worked beside them, and shared their dreams.

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Dr. Allam presents the School's Centennial Medal to Mrs. Elizabeth Moran in 1984.



Dr. Allam and Dr. Robert R. Marshak in 1995.