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Donor Profile: Lois and Donald Cross

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A Tale of Two Men—and One Woman, Eight Children, Countless Students and a Farm Full of Animals

BY KATE JUDGE

Donald Cross had always wanted to be a veterinarian, but it wasn't to be; after World War II his father needed his help in the family plumbing business. Still, his life would be full of animal and human care-giving—and his name, along with that of his wife, Lois, always will be linked with becoming a veterinarian. In 2001, after Donald's death, Lois decided to endow a scholarship in his memory at Penn Vet. Don's veterinary aspirations, combined with gratitude for the care provided to their animals through Penn Vet's New Bolton Center, inspired Lois to make the gift. "It was something I had been thinking about for a long time—his desire to be a vet and his love of horses," Lois said. "But even the children did not know he had wished to be a veterinarian."

Donald was not the type of person to focus on what he did not have in life. He and Lois made a life on a farm in Pennsylvania's Delaware County and were busy raising eight children and horses, pigs, chickens and border collies. While Donald ran the family business, Lois managed the farm. Everyone helped care for the animals, from participating in 4-H to raising horses, including Rippling Charger, a 1976 winner of Best in Breed.


When any animals were sick or needed routine medical care, the Crosses relied on Penn Vet's field service. Lois describes her decision to create the Donald Cross Scholarship in 2001 and the Donald and Lois Cross Scholarship in 2006 as a tale of two men. First was Donald. The second was the field service's **Dr. Richard Bartholomew**, emeritus associate professor of medicine.

During Dr. Bartholomew's almost three decades in the field service, he treated thousands of animals and taught countless students, including his son, Richard, and daughter-in-law, Amy, who graduated from Penn Vet in 1994 and 1993, respectively. Lois describes his visits with the students, "We'd have the animals all lined up for him when he and the students came. He was a teacher with high expectations. After the taking care of the animals, I'd have everyone back for lunch."

"Large animal practice is very personal. Clients become a part of your family," said Dr. Bartholomew. Now retired and living in Vermont, he remembers with affection the family feeling always present during his visits to the Crosses' farm, where students, the Cross children, veterinarian and client would visit together, learn and share a meal. "The Crosses were a wonderful family to work with—always willing to let the students see and experience what they needed while we cared for their animals," he recalled.

Every client whose animal is treated at Penn Vet—whether through field service, the George D. Widener Hospital for Large Animals or the Matthew J. Ryan Veterinary Hospital—plays an important role in helping educate tomorrow's veterinarians, an integral part of Penn's mission.

Financial assistance for veterinary students is a core priority of the School of Veterinary Medicine. Penn Vet students graduate with an average debt of \$120,000. This financial burden has had a negative impact on graduates' ability to pursue less lucrative fields such as public health and large animal medicine.

There are several ways to support Penn Vet students. Contributions of any size may be made to the Veterinary Student Scholarship Fund; donors can sponsor an Opportunity Scholarship, which offers financial aid and mentoring from the donor or selected faculty member; or a new scholarship can be endowed to permanently ensure financial assistance to future veterinarians. For more information on supporting Penn Vet students, visit our Web site at www.vet.upenn.edu/giving/giving_teaching.html. 



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