



4-1-2009

## Obituaries: Dr. David Detweiler and Dr. Charles Reid



## Dr. David Detweiler, C'41, V'42, G'49

*Sadly for me, Dr. Detweiler retired while I was a veterinary student, however I have benefited beyond words by the section and specialty he fathered. Approximately six years ago, he contacted me requesting that I read some studies for him while he was unavailable. The breadth of his knowledge in toxicology was stunning and the experience was truly enlightening. During this period I was fortunate to have gotten to know him a bit better. He was truly a renaissance man; his abilities in the sciences were mirrored in the arts. I was amazed to learn he could speak six languages, although he humbly told me he was not fluent in ALL of them. To achieve a fraction of his sagacity would be success indeed.*

— Meg Sleeper, V'93, chief, Section of Cardiology

**D**r. David K. Detweiler C'41, V'42, GR'49, professor emeritus of physiology and animal biology, died from esophageal cancer February 15 at the age of 89.

Dr. Detweiler, recognized as a world leader in comparative cardiology, received his VMD degree in 1942. He immediately joined the faculty as an assistant instructor in physiology and pharmacology. In 1944 he acted as head of physiology and pharmacology until 1947. During these early years in his career Dr. Detweiler carried a heavy teaching load but nevertheless found time to begin to collect a series of electrocardiograms from dogs in the clinic. This was the beginning of work which would develop into a life-long career in cardiology.

Dr. Detweiler was one of the first of the “new breed” of faculty who appeared in the late 1940s and 1950s and who, despite heavy teaching loads, made the necessary sacrifices to develop major areas of research. In his early career he often worked under make-shift conditions and with little financial support. In the 1950s he was able to obtain some small grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for epidemiological studies on heart disease in dogs. In 1960 he was awarded

a one-million-dollar grant from NIH for a 10-year period to establish and support the Comparative Cardiovascular Studies Unit (CCSU). At the time this was the largest grant ever awarded to an individual at Penn Vet. The creation of the CCSU established this school as the world center for comparative cardiovascular research, a position which it still holds today. The CCSU has provided training to numerous individuals in the field of comparative cardiovascular medicine.

Dr. Detweiler's contributions to Penn Vet go far beyond his specific teaching and research activities. His early work came at a time when the school needed to establish a research reputation; his work also helped draw other outstanding individuals to the school and to stimulate his own colleagues to engage in research. The reputation of the school was greatly enhanced within the university, and in the veterinary and medical professions on a world-wide basis.

Dr. Detweiler is survived by his wife, Birthe; children, Ellyn Mendham, Diane Heller, David Detweiler, Jodi Naessig, Inge Detweiler, Kenneth Detweiler; stepchildren, Julie Sheehy, Henrick Erbak, Claus Erbak, Kenneth Erbak; 18 grandchildren; 11 great grandchildren; and two nieces.



## Dr. Charles Reid

*Dr. Reid was a mentor to me from the time I arrived at Penn Vet till the end of his life. During his bout with cancer, I substituted for him in radiology at NBC, reading films in the early morning before clinic hours and taking the films I was unsure of to the hospital for him to review. When he was back in the hospital with cardiac problems, I did the same and was the last visitor he had before he had his coronary and quadruple bypass surgery. He told everyone he introduced me to from then on that trying to keep me on the straight and narrow was the cause of his heart attack! I was one of many students who sought his advice when making life-changing decisions and he was always ready with sage advice, presented with humor, which made it palatable. We will all miss that wisdom and humor.*

— Midge Leitch, V'73, staff vet

**D**r. Charles F. Reid, professor emeritus of radiology and a founder of the American College of Veterinary Radiologists, died February 12, while walking his dogs with his longtime companion, Kathleen Crompton. He was 75.

Dr. Reid graduated from Cornell University's School of Veterinary Medicine in 1956 and following military service, earned an MS from Cornell and completed a two-year research fellowship at the VA Hospital in New York. He then joined the Penn Vet faculty at New Bolton Center in 1963. In his 35-year tenure he chaired both the Section of Radiology and the Department of Clinical Studies at New Bolton Center.

Acknowledged by both his friends in the horse world and colleagues in the veterinary profession as the “father of equine radiology,” his opinion was sought worldwide because of his clinical approach to equine radiographic interpretation. His yearly “consulting session” at the AAEP Annual Convention developed into the famed Radiology Panels of the 1970s, during which Dr. Reid's affectionate and humorous jousting with the panelists kept the lecture rooms filled to overflowing with veterinarians grateful for his insight and entertained by his wit.

Dr. Reid is survived by his brother, Richard; his sons, Todd and Tom; three grandchildren; and his companion, Kathleen Crompton. ▀