

Myron Gustin Fincher

November 25, 1898 — March 2, 1981

Dr. Myron G. Fincher was born on a small farm at Corfu, New York, November 25, 1898, the youngest of five children. He began his education under the able tutelage of an older sister who was a graduate of the Brockport Normal School. His formal schooling began at the second grade level. Upon graduating from high school at the age of sixteen, he spent the next year and a half working in a machine shop and on his father's farm.

His great fondness for animals, particularly horses, brought him to Cornell and the New York State Veterinary College in 1916. He was appointed instructor in the Department of Medicine when he graduated in 1920. By 1925 he had obtained his Master of Science degree in spite of the rigorous schedule he was obliged to maintain as a clinician in the Ambulatory Clinic.

Dr. Fincher spent the academic year 1926-27 at a large horse breeding establishment in Kentucky to gain experience with the reproductive problems of this species. At the conclusion of his stay, he was offered a large salary to remain on a permanent basis, but he preferred to return to the college.

He became an assistant professor in 1926 and a professor in 1938. On the retirement of Dr. Udall in 1942, Dr. Fincher was appointed head of the Department of Medicine and Obstetrics and director of the Ambulatory Clinic, a position he held until his retirement in 1965.

In 1943-44 he served as acting dean of the New York State Veterinary College and repeated this duty for a few months in 1945. As a result, he was invited to accept the deanship at Texas A&M and later at the University of Minnesota. Both of these offers he declined. He had previously refused a professorship in medicine at Ohio State University, but in 1940 he served as acting professor of medicine at that institution.

Besides being listed in *Who's Who*, he held membership in Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, and Phi Zeta. The New York State Veterinary Medical Society selected him as the Veterinarian of the Year in 1963 because of his long and distinguished service to the profession.

He was the recipient of the Borden Award from the American Veterinary Medical Association in 1954 and served on the Executive Board of that organization from 1956 to 1965. Both the Southern Tier Veterinary Medical Association and the New York State Veterinary Medical Society honored him as president. He held memberships in many professional organizations, including the United States Livestock Sanitary Association.

During his long career of service to the veterinary profession, he published over 124 articles on diseases of domestic animals and was widely sought as a consultant. When he was called to the farm of Governor Thomas E. Dewey in 1946, he found the dairy herd severely affected with mastitis. Mr. Dewey became very interested in this disease and encouraged the legislature to appropriate money to set up the New York State Mastitis Research and Control Program. Dr. Fincher was appointed to the directorship with the authority to set up six laboratories throughout the state and to select a staff for each unit. This program became internationally recognized as the best approach to the control of bovine mastitis. For almost 20 years Dr. Fincher carried the responsibility for the directorship in addition to his other commitments.

In 1960 he spent a year in Peru, Uruguay, and Brazil as a specialist for the International Education Exchange Service for the U.S. Department of State. He had been a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Thessaloniki in Greece the year before and had received an honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree, a rather unusual honor at that university.

On January 31, 1965, he retired seventeen months prematurely so that he could accept an assignment in Nigeria. At that time he had served the college for more than forty-four years. As head of the Department of Medicine and Surgery he helped in establishing a new veterinary college at Ahmadu University in Northern Nigeria during 1965-67. On his return from Nigeria, he accepted an assignment with the Veterinary Medical Division of the United States Food and Drug Administration.

Finally, in 1973, he went to Citanova-Marche, Italy, to help organize an equine breeding farm. Here, on the shores of the blue Adriatic, he was back with his first love, horses. He wrote to a friend: "It is like a paid vacation to watch a band of young horses race down a country lane from the pasture to the box and oats."

While highly interested in research of reproductive diseases and disorders of horses and cattle, he was intensely concerned with the clinical application of the fruits of the laboratory. As a teacher and clinician, he was highly regarded by both students and colleagues. There was an aura about him best described as strictly professional. He performed his duties with dispatch and his clinical teaching with dignity, but there were no shortcuts in quality, dress, or demeanor. His code for neatness and cleanliness set a high standard for students: Colleagues will always remember him as a great gentleman.

He is survived by his wife, Evelyn Davis Fincher, whom he married June 25, 1924, and his three daughters, Joyce Coye, Esther Hays, and Myra Tennant.