

William C. Rebhun

July 24, 1947 — March 24, 1999

Cornell University and the College of Veterinary Medicine occupied the majority of Bill's professional life. As a faculty member in the College of Veterinary Medicine from 1977-99, he rose through the professional ranks. From 1985-88, he served as head of the Large Animal Clinic. Bill was board certified as a Diplomate in both the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists and the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine.

Prior to his faculty appointment, Bill was in private mixed veterinary practice in Troy, New York, from 1974-77, and in Delmar, New York, from 1971-74. His college days were spent at Cornell's New York State Veterinary College from 1967-71 and the New York State College of Agriculture from 1965 -67.

Bill was President of the Capital District Veterinary Group in 1973 and President of the New York Southern Tier Veterinary Medical Association from 1982-83. His professional associations included the American Veterinary Medical Association, American Society of Veterinary Ophthalmologists, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, and the New York State Veterinary Medical Society.

Although a tireless clinician first, Bill still authored or co-authored 107 scientific manuscripts, 20 textbook chapters, and a textbook entitled, *Diseases of Dairy Cattle*, published by Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore and Philadelphia in 1995. He was a respected reviewer and editor of scientific manuscripts for a variety of journals with topics from equine and bovine medicine to ophthalmology. He gave countless seminars at national and international veterinary meetings as he was a well-respected and immensely popular speaker.

Both the regional and state veterinary medical societies honored Bill by presenting him with the award of Outstanding Service to Veterinary Medicine. These awards honored Bill for his contributions in education, research, and practice.

Since his appointment to the faculty at the College of Veterinary Medicine in 1977, over 2,000 graduate veterinarians from Cornell University were influenced by his unique teaching personality, thousands more in veterinary medicine have benefited by his publications, invited presentations, seminars, and continuing education programs. His practical, no-nonsense approach to the diagnosis and treatment of clinical problems, particularly

of dairy cattle, was a wonderful, almost mystical phenomenon. His ability to combine the science and artistry of medical practice was held in awe, if not envy, by many.

Bill was a competitive individual who worked extremely hard and played hard. His presence was commanding, comforting, candid, often passionate, and always appreciated. He had a remarkable gift for accurately recalling and relaying experiences. He had a prodigious and exact memory, and candid uncompromising honesty. These qualities were evident in his relationships, professionally and recreationally. He was entertaining in a wide spectrum of situations. These traits were also evident in his classroom. Bill was quick to use past situations and cases, both good and bad, as teaching material. He was quick to use mistakes he had made or witnessed to emphasize a point. Bill respected the opinion of others and relished the academic exchanges with colleagues. He was opinionated and passionate when expressing his own ideas. He admired and respected the talented individuals around him and held his head high and his mind open, always striving to learn — even in his final months.

Bill had a tremendous impact on many individuals but a group that was especially important to him were the residents in medicine, ophthalmology, and surgery. He spent time with them, nurtured them, celebrated their successes and commiserated when they failed. He touched their lives in a way that only a mentor can. Bill also held a special place in the hearts of the staff and technicians who worked with him. He treated them with respect and valued their efforts and their opinions. Bill was loved and respected by students, past and present, and served as a role model for hundreds of the veterinary students whom he taught in lecture, laboratory, and one-on-one in the teaching hospital. Countless clients and farmers in New York and neighboring areas have been devastated by losing such a talented and devoted veterinarian and friend.

Bill was as active with non-academic interests as with academe. He was not a spectator but an active participant in numerous sports, particularly softball. A rugged individualist, he was also a true outdoorsman and an avid hunter.

Bill is survived by his wife, Bridget Barry; son, Rob; daughter, April; and grandson, Zach. His professional influence lives on, especially in the minds of his colleagues, the 18 large animal medicine residents, 9 ophthalmology and numerous surgery residents who spent formative, unforgettable years in training under Dr. Rebhun, Bill, Boom, or “the Chief.”

He will be deeply missed and remembered by all his colleagues, clients, and friends as a warm and caring person who touched the lives of many people and their animals.

"The cow is the foster mother of the human race. From the day of the ancient Hindoo to this time have the thoughts of men turned to this kindly and beneficent creature as one of the chief sustaining forces of human life."

W.D. Hoard, Founder of Hoard's Dairyman, Copyright 1925, by W.D. Hoard and Sons, Co.

Susan Fubini, Ronald Riis, Eric Trotter