



## **Francis Henry Fox**

March 11, 1923 – March 13, 2015

Dr. Francis Henry Fox passed away on March 13, 2015 at the age of 92. He was born on March 11, 1923 in Clifton Springs, NY, the son of Henry Sylvester and Alma (Lindner) Fox. He grew up on a farm that had horses, dairy cows, pigs, chickens, and cash crops. From the farm he went on to have a distinguished career in veterinary medicine. As a student he worked in the Cornell infirmary, and there he met a nurse named Mildred Cullen, who was to become his devoted wife 'Cully' for 68 years. Together they had four children - Rosanna 'Rusty' Fox, Laurinda 'Rindy' (Stephen) Garcia, Teresa 'Terry' (Mark) Malaspina, and Henry 'Ted' Fox - and 7 grandchildren.

Dr. Fox graduated from the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine in October of 1945. He was recruited to the Ambulatory Clinic at Cornell after graduation, giving up a job in the Small Animal Clinic, and then spent one year as an instructor at the veterinary college at the Ohio State University. Dr. Fox then returned to Cornell where he taught physical diagnosis and large animal medicine from 1947 until retirement in 1992. Early in his career, in 1946, Dr. Fox encountered and spread a new contagious disease in the local cattle herds. He recognized that the febrile cows affected with this condition had almost no white blood cells. With the aid of his colleagues at Cornell the viral cause of this disease, bovine virus diarrhea, was identified. The disease remains very important for cattle in the United States to this day.

Over the course of Dr. Fox's illustrious career, he educated and influenced thousands of students, teaching them the art of physical examination. The secret was to use all of the senses all of the time, to make a diagnosis by closely observing the patient instead of depending on laboratory tests. Under his gruff exterior was a genuine, caring, loyal friend and role model. He demanded on time arrival at lectures, hard work and genuine effort from his students, and provided subtle encouragement to help them become able practitioners.

Dr. Fox held many administrative positions within the veterinary college and the veterinary profession. He served as Head of the Ambulatory Clinic, Chairman of the Department of Large Animal Medicine, Obstetrics and Surgery, president of the American Association of Bovine

Practitioners (an organization which he helped to found), and regional director for that organization. He served on the Executive Board of the American Veterinary Medical Association for 15 years and chaired it for two terms. Dr. Fox was a charter diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine. He served as veterinarian for the New York State Fair for 26 years. He was active in the New York Veterinary Medical Society, from which he received the Distinguished Life Service Award, and served for 18 years on the local Tompkins County Board of Health and was chairman of the board for 13 years.

Dr. Fox was a beloved prankster, and past students fondly remember the pranks Dr. Fox pulled on them. Many of these doings are recorded in a booklet, the Fox Chronicles, presented to him at his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and available through the Cornell library system. The students also enjoyed reciprocating whenever possible. His birthday was celebrated each year with concerted attacks on his office. Some years it was filled with balloons or styrofoam peanuts, some years with farm animals, once the furniture was relocated to the roof of the research tower, and once (when entry into the office was stymied) the door was bricked shut. Each year members of OTS, the Omega Tau Sigma veterinary fraternity, would risk a fall or even arrest to paint a birthday greeting to Dr. Fox on the disused railroad bridge over Route 366 in Varna.

After his retirement, Dr. Fox stayed active on campus and on the farms of his former clients for many more years. He always had a great interest in the farm families as well as in the animals to which he tended. He remained the driving force behind senior seminar, a class during which each student presented the results of an in-depth clinical investigation to faculty and fellow students in the college. Graduate veterinarians across the country made regular pilgrimages to his office or called him up for consultation over a difficult case.

Dr. Fox was a giant in veterinary medicine. Although Cornell University and the profession have suffered a great loss with his death, his legend lives on and all he taught will continue to help veterinarians and the veterinary profession for years to come.

*Mary C. Smith, chair; Robert B. Hillman, Leslie D. Appel*