

# **T. Richard Houpt**

*October 9, 1925 — October 7, 2003*

On the morning of October 6, 2003 Professor Emeritus T. Richard Houpt delivered a 90-minute lecture to first-year students of Veterinary Medicine. The following morning, he said a sad “goodbye” to the last of his experimental animals and closed his laboratory. In the afternoon, together with his beloved wife and constant co-investigator and companion, Dr. Katherine Albro Houpt, he attended a departmental seminar following which he engaged the speaker in animated discussion. Very shortly thereafter he returned home and, within the hour kept an unexpected appointment with a much higher authority. The orderly series of events closing out his earthly life encapsulates the things that he valued most dearly: his loving relationships with his family, students, and experimental animals (particularly his pigs) as well as with his engagement in expanding the knowledge and understanding of veterinary physiology. When Dr. R.O. Davies, a close friend and colleague, was asked to concisely summarize Dick’s career, he said that the attribute that best defined Dick as a scholar was that he wanted to help everyone “know how animals work.”

After accomplishing the goal of instructing veterinary students for fifty years, Dick “cut back a bit” by discontinuing his practice of baking cinnamon buns for tutorial groups on Friday mornings. Fortunately, he continued to present lectures and to publish in his areas of expertise including Acid-Base balance, and Water and Electrolyte balance and the Regulation of Food Intake and Satiety. His unpretentious and lucid style was much appreciated by students as were colorful slides drawn from his research adventures in comparative aspects of salt and water balance and temperature regulation—the laughing (panting) reindeer, the imperious camel (which doesn’t store water in its humps), and himself astride a tiny burro in the deserts of North Africa.

Born in Roslyn, Pennsylvania, Dick received his undergraduate and Veterinary Medical education at the University of Pennsylvania, completing the V.M.D. degree in 1950. In 1953, he completed the M.S. degree in Veterinary Pathology at the University of Illinois, Urbana. Subsequently, he returned to the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and received the Ph.D. degree in Medical Physiology in 1958. During his graduate studies at Illinois and Penn, he was employed as Instructor in Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology except for one year spent as a Research Associate in the Duke University Desert Expedition headed by Professors Bodil and Knut Schmidt-Nielsen in Beni Abbes, Algeria. They studied water and nitrogen conservation in camels. This served as the entrée to Dick’s dissertation on urea recycling in herbivorous animals including ruminants and horses.

Following the completion of the Ph.D. degree, he remained at the University of Pennsylvania as a member of the faculties of the School of Veterinary Medicine and of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. He stayed there as a valued teacher and researcher until his recruitment in 1971 as Professor of Veterinary Physiology at the New York State College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University.

The arrival of Dick and Kathe Houpt at Cornell provided additional strength and breadth to an already preeminent center of research and teaching of comparative gastrointestinal physiology. Over the years, Dick's research turned toward behavioral physiology and, particularly, ingestive behavior—neural and hormonal factors regulating hunger, thirst and satiety using pigs as his experimental model. Often in collaboration with Kathe, he has published extensively concerning the use of pigs as experimental subjects.

His wife; his two sons, Thomas and Charles; and his brother, David, survive Dick. He was a central figure in the teaching of Veterinary Physiology to professional, graduate and undergraduate students at Cornell from his arrival in 1971 until the penultimate day of his life. His notable career achievements were recognized in 2000 with the Alumni Award of Merit for Teaching and Research from the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. He was an outstanding mentor, much loved and admired by his students and colleagues as an example of the best attributes of a scholar and a human being. We miss him.

*Ronald R. Minor, Richard E. Rawson, John F. Wootton*