

## **In memorium: Dr. Stanley Mark Dennis**

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Dr. Stanley M. Dennis, at 90 years of age, our colleague, friend, educator, theriogenologist and reproductive pathologist passed away on Wednesday, April 1, 2015, in Topeka, KS. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; immediate and extended family of two daughters, two sons, one sister, 14 grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his first wife, Naldi, and their eldest daughter and son.

Stanley was born in Australia. At 17, he enlisted in the Australian Army during World War II and was stationed in New Guinea. After discharge, he obtained his veterinary degree (BVSc) and PhD from the University of Sydney. He worked for seven years in dairy practice and three years as senior veterinary pathologist in the Animal Health and Diagnostic Laboratory in Western Australia. Dr. Dennis earned Fellowships in the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (FRCVS), the Royal College of Pathologists (FRCPath) in England, and from the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists (FACVSc). He is a Diplomate of the American College of Theriogenologists (ACT). In addition, he served as ACT president from 1990 to 1991 and was a member and chairman of the ACT Certifying Examination Committee.

Dr. Dennis was Professor and Head of the Department of Veterinary Pathology at Kansas State University. During that time, he helped establish and administer the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria. After 26 years at Kansas State, Dr. Dennis served as Founding Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Medical Sciences, at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad (St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago), and as Dean at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in St. Kitts, British West Indies. He left retirement for the third time when he became Dean at the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the American University of Antigua (AUA) for two years. In 2001, Dr. Dennis was awarded a Member of the British Empire (MBE) by Queen Elizabeth II for meritorious contributions to international veterinary medicine for his service as Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine at Ross University.

As an internationally-recognized researcher in reproductive pathology and pregnancy wastage in domestic animals, he published more than 242 scientific papers and oversaw the academic programs of 34 doctoral and three master's degree candidates.

As one of my professors during my veterinary studies, Dr. Dennis was extraordinary for his mentorship, enthusiasm for all things theriogenology and pathology, and for creating passion in us to learn and enjoy being challenged. I was in an accident during veterinary school and missed one of Dr. Dennis' examinations and had to make it up. I went to his office and he said, "You'll take the same exam as your classmates." He was always fair, but that seemed unexpected. Then I took the exam, orally, question by question, sitting across from Dr. Dennis. "Number 1, the stem is '\_\_\_.' Now, foil A – why or why not?, foil B – why or why not?," etc. I had to answer/explain every single multiple choice option to his satisfaction. It was very fortunate that I shared his enthusiasm for pathology or my studies might have been abbreviated.

I was fortunate to enroll in his graduate class (offered summer term for at least a decade at KSU CVM), Pregnancy Wastage in Domestic Animals, prior to sitting for the ACT certifying examination. What wonderful preparation. Many aspiring ACT diplomates benefited from his vast knowledge and interest in abortion diseases of animals. One clear memory of mine, to which I still refer in my teaching, is the Time of Death classification. The system originator must have had a sense of humor, as TOD is German for *death*.

His sense of humor could be quite dry. Years ago, the ACT examination was given in two increments. The written at a location administered by one's mentor, an ACT diplomate, and immediately before the fall conference, an oral examination by committee members. I had passed the written portion of the ACT certifying examination and was in Nashville for the oral examination. I remember some tense

moments during the two groups of questioners. All candidates had to wait until day's end to be informed of the outcome. As many early in their careers, I couldn't afford the headquarters hotel and stayed down the road at some 'cheaper venue'. I returned to the Opryland Hotel and was told to find Dr. Dennis who was to inform me of my outcome. The hotel had a grand staircase built in two sweeping curves. I was at the bottom, saw Dr. Dennis to the left at the top and all he did was glare and indicate with one finger that I was to come to him. Such a long staircase – he didn't once flinch or change his expression. I made it to the top, stood in front of him – cringing. He stuck out his hand, "Congratulations, Dr. Carleton!" Good grief – he was laughing. I remember being so relieved. I didn't want to disappoint him.

I last saw Stan at an SFT conference two years ago. It was my delight to chat with Stan and Barbara, and then introduce him to Dr. Jennifer Roberts, my colleague at Michigan State. Dr. Dennis was unchanged – always interested in the next generation – the next theriogenologist to carry on his life's work. It was wonderful to take time for lunch with Dr. Dennis, Barbara and Jennifer – to meet and talk with an individual who meant so much to me and many others. He was one of the best and shall sorely be missed.

Though Dr. Dennis had a diverse and remarkable life in veterinary medicine spanning six decades in many countries, he was a simple man who loved helping others. His supportive influence inspired many young veterinarians to pursue careers both in theriogenology and pathology. I invite those of you who knew him, or who appreciated his many contributions, to consider making a memorial gift to Kansas State University, College of Veterinary Medicine (101 Trotter Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506; [vetmed@k-state.edu](mailto:vetmed@k-state.edu)), Christ the King Catholic Church (5973 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Topeka, KS 66614), or the Theriogenology Foundation which Dr. Dennis supported (<http://www.theriofoundation.org>).