

**The 2018 Bartlett Address**  
**Ruminations from the back 40**

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It is a wonderful and great honor to be the recipient of the 2018 Bartlett Award. Previous Bartlett Award winners comprise a 'who's-who' list of distinguished theriogenologists, and to be included in this esteemed group is a humbling experience. It is gratifying to be recognized in this manner by colleagues.

It is an interesting exercise to reflect upon one's professional life and career. I grew up on a mixed farm in the Peace River District of northern Alberta. My father was born on that farm in a pioneer environment and spent his life growing his farm into a very successful enterprise. My mother was validictorian at her graduation from the School of Nursing at the Vancouver General Hospital. Initially their farm was a traditional mixed enterprise with work and saddle horses, beef and milk cows, pigs, chickens, dogs and cats, transitioning from the horse era to the machinery era. As a result I gained experience with a wide variety of farm animals, an excellent background for a budding veterinarian.

There are many people who had an influence on my development as a person and my professional career. Of course the first were my parents. They encouraged their children to work hard, participate in all sports and community activities, and get a good education. More currently, my present family, wife Joyce, daughter Christine and two lovely granddaughters Sadie and Eliza, have a huge influence on my wellbeing.

Following graduation from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) in 1972, I worked in a mixed practice in Fairview, Alberta with Dr. Jim Henderson. It was a new practice expanding to two veterinarians, and in 1974 it expanded again to three veterinarians with the addition of Dr. Richard McWatt. It was basically a beef cattle practice with a few dairies, the occasional swine and small ruminant case, and a significant small animal component. A mixed practice such as this is great training for a young, novice veterinarian as it requires a broad base of talents in a variety of disciplines and people skills. The experience provides a solid foundation for young veterinarians who may later transition to professional specialization.

In 1978 I returned to WCVM to do graduate studies, obtaining a Masters of Veterinary Science (MVSc) in 1980. The MVSc is a combination clinical and research program. My research component investigated factors governing maintenance of pregnancy in cows. It was a huge learning experience on how to develop, perform and publish a research project. A large portion of the clinical experience included the development of non-surgical bovine embryo transfer techniques. The MVSc program is multi-species, including considerable equine and canine reproduction. The broadly based program provided a solid foundation for future professional aspirations.

For the next several years I worked for the WCVM Reproductive Research Trust providing on-farm embryo transfer service to producers in Western Canada. It was a rewarding experience to work with some of the best cattle, on the best farms and ranches, with the best producers in Western Canada. It was an exhilarating experience to participate in the production of 'litters' of calves from top quality cows.

In 1983 I joined the theriogenology group at the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC). At that time the OVC was in an expansion phase with an increase in faculty and new physical facilities. Both of the incumbent theriogenology faculty were leaving, Dr. Barker retiring and Dr. Bosu moving to Wisconsin. The new theriogenology group consisted of four rookies, Brian Buckrell, Wayne Etherington, Neil Savage and myself, necessitating in a dramatic and steep learning curve for each of us for survival. My position at the OVC included teaching undergraduate and graduate students, providing clinical service in the hospital, managing a research program and administrative responsibilities. In 1986, I became a Diplomate, American College of Theriogenologists.

My tenure at OVC was an enormously rewarding career. Veterinary students are the cream-of-the-crop, highly selected, smart, motivated, intelligent young people and are a pleasure to be associated

with. I remained at OVC, progressing through the various academic rankings, until retirement as a Professor in 2008.

The past 40 years has brought many prominent advancements to the veterinary profession. Specifically influencing the theriogenology discipline, some of the more notable were the introduction of prostaglandin and gonadotropin releasing hormone (GnRH), the development of ultrasonography, the advancement of in vitro fertilization (IVF), and the discovery of cloning. Recent graduates accept these as routine procedures. What changes might occur in the next half century?

My community commitment included serving on the Board of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO), the licensing body for veterinarians in Ontario, becoming President in 1999. During this time I served on the National Examining Board Committee. One of the responsibilities of this committee was participation in the AVMA veterinary college accreditation program. It was a great learning experience to observe the strengths and weaknesses of other veterinary colleges. I also served on the Board of the Canadian Embryo Transfer Association (CETA) for many years after being part of the team responsible for the inception of CETA, concluding with a lifetime membership. It is always a satisfying experience to participate in the administration of the various organizations with which you are involved and which impact your life.

There are many people to recognize for their contribution to my career journey. A few of these colleagues follow but the list is long and I apologize to those I've missed.

**Dr. Reuben Mapletoft.** When I returned to graduate school in 1978, Dr. Mapletoft had recently joined the faculty at the WCVM bringing his interest in bovine embryo transfer. It was an exciting time as the embryo transfer industry was changing from the clinical, surgical procedures to the more practical on-farm, non-surgical techniques. I had the great pleasure of working very closely with Reuben for several years and we remain friends and colleagues.

**Drs. Bill Cates and Frank Bristol** were the theriogenology faculty at WCVM during my undergraduate and graduate programs and were very instrumental in my basic theriogenology training.

**Dr. Bill Adams** was primary advisor for my graduate program, providing wonderful guidance and friendship.

**Drs. Brian Buckrell, Cathy Gartley and Tracey Chenier** were colleagues and friends with whom I had the pleasure of working in the Theriogenology group at OVC.

**Drs. Keith Betteridge, Stanley Leibo and Nada Loskutoff** were faculty in the OVC Embryo Research Laboratory, with whom I worked on many projects.

**Dr. Wayne Martin**, an epidemiologist, was the initial chair of the Department of Population Medicine, and taught experimental design and statistical analysis to faculty and graduate students, always encouraging us to plan quality research projects.

One of the most enjoyable parts of my career was involvement with graduate students, whether as the primary advisory, committee member or supportive faculty. We were blessed with many wonderful graduate students, each bringing their own interests and expertise to our program. **James Thompson** is on faculty at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Texas A & M, **Cathy Gartley** provides small animal theriogenology service at OVC, **Tracey Chenier** provides equine theriogenology service at OVC, **Claudia Jimenez** is at Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria Y de Zootecnia, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogota, Columbia, **Alejandro Estrada** is at Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria Y Zootecnia, Universidad Veracruzana, Veracruz, Mexico, **Ramanathan Kasimanickam** is on faculty at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Washington State University, **Cyril Stephen** is on faculty at the School of Animal and Veterinary Science, Charles Sturt University, Waga Waga, NSW, Australia, **Ken Christy** provides bovine embryo transfer service in Ontario, **Lee Morris** worked with Dr.T.Allen in Cambridge, England and presently provides assisted reproductive technologies in equine practice in New Zealand, **Pedro Jou** provided a speciality reproductive equine practice in Ontario until his early death, **Rasa Levstein** is in small animal practice in Ontario, **Scott Madill** is in veterinary practice in Australia, **Andria Acs** works with Novartis Health in Lausanne, Switzerland, and **Hernan Ortegon** is with the Alberta Department of Agriculture. The Doctor of Veterinary Science (DVSc) program includes a research component including writing a thesis, and a multi-species clinical component. Many of our graduate students have successfully

completed the ACT board examination, becoming Diplomates of the American College of Theriogenologists. I am a strong advocate of multi-species undergraduate and graduate student programs as I believe the comparative medicine aspect of veterinary medicine provides a very solid career foundation.

It is my understanding that the theriogenology programs at many colleges are being downsized. This is certainly the case at OVC where there are now two theriogenology faculty, down from four faculty several years ago. It is well documented that efficient, economic survival of any animal production operation begins with a successful reproductive program. Our College of Theriogenologists must continue to lobby deans of veterinary colleges in the importance of quality theriogenology teaching programs in their schools.

In conclusion, I consider myself one of the lucky people who enjoyed going to work every day. The veterinary profession is a wonderful profession, and teaching veterinary students is challenging and extremely rewarding. Recognition by colleagues as the recipient of the 2018 Bartlett Award is a wonderful conclusion. Thank you.

