MODELING AND MENTORING

The 1996 David E. Bartlett Lecture Award

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There are certain events that happen during life’s journey for which one does not forget the exact circumstance when news of those events was received. I was working in my basement office on Thursday afternoon, August 31, 1995, trying to secure funding from churches in Indiana to support the dreams of a woman athlete from Sri Lanka to attend the Southeast Asian track and field games in Jakarta. It was hoped her participation would qualify her for Sri Lanka’s Olympic team. She is a world class javelin thrower at the University of Indianapolis, winning the NCAA Division II in both 1994 and 1995. I decided to take a break and go to the mail box, where I found a letter from the Hastings office. Upon opening it, I learned that I had been selected for the 1996 David E. Bartlett Lecture Award. I was so stunned that I read the letter twice and, in fact, then called the Hastings office to confirm what was being read. “Surely this is a mistake,” I told Jan Weiler, but she assured me the letter had been sent to the right person.

As you can surmise from the above remarks, my selection was truly a surprise. I want to thank you for the surprise letter and to express sincere appreciation to all of you for your generous award. I have reviewed all lectures prepared by previous colleagues who have received the award. The common threads have been the appreciative nature of each recipient’s remarks, the historical nature of each paper, and the fact that all previous recipients have been faculty members for part or most of their careers. The uncommon thread this year is that I am the first recipient who has never been a faculty member. I am retired and have been out of active practice in an industrial setting for five years.

This morning, before we get busy with the activities of the day, I want us to think about the chosen topic, “Modeling and Mentoring,” and some of the experiences that have evolved in the last forty-five years that have had a significant impact upon me. As you listen, please ponder your own experiences along with mine. Are you just living from event to event or could you, with more purpose, be a better model and mentor?

At the Educator’s Forum at the San Antonio meeting in 1995, Dr. Patricia Olson reported the results of a survey. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information on how the training and/or certification of The American College of Theriogenologists might be improved. The survey was conducted with veterinarians who sought board certification during the previous ten years. Some were certified and some were not. Upon reading a long list of comments provided by these colleagues, it became noticeable that “modeling and mentoring,” which can enhance personal and professional achievement and prepare one to perform improved service to the public, were missing. Only one respondent mentioned that an excellent mentor had been available. In fact, there seemed to be some disappointments expressed by colleagues who were entering the most promising and vital years of their work life. Occasionally, poor mentoring was mentioned, and exemplary model programs seemed lacking. This past year I have pondered the survey findings and have felt concerned. It may be telling us something unsettling about the priorities in our educational institutions.

My wife, Linda, had similar concerns about the education profession when she completed a study and reviewed the literature on that topic for a Ph.D. thesis in the College of Education at the University of Wisconsin. About twenty percent of first-year teachers in our nation’s schools leave after just one year in the classroom, and many others leave the second or third year. What a waste of resources and a heavy load of disappointments from unfulfilled expectations, I thought. Of those teachers who remained in the
teaching profession, how many of those were less capable? Perhaps the teachers who left after one year would really have been the better ones if a good model program to retain beginning teachers and a good mentor had been available.

When the letter was received last August 31 concerning the Bartlett Lecture Award, it rekindled some thoughts about my fortunate work in life, because it was on that date in 1965 that I joined Dr. David Bartlett and Dr. Lester Larson to work with them at American Breeders Service in Wisconsin. They became my mentors that day, and they were role models beyond the usual. In all my years at ABS, I always felt that I was working with them and not for them. There is a difference. In part, that trait promoted my longevity at ABS beyond my expectations.

In struggling for a topic for this address, my thoughts turned to Dr. Olson’s survey and to my wife’s research and insights. Then, my thoughts continued to stray to my own personal experiences. What role models did I have? Who were my mentors? In your own experiences, have there been adequate model programs to help the veterinarian ease through the transition period from student to the first work experience, be it clinical practice or research? Was there a superior mentor at your side? Or, as in many cases, were exemplary models and good mentors missing? There seems to be a great need in our profession. Hence, the title for this lecture was born. Hopefully, what I have to relate will be helpful to the ACT as it continues to explore the possibilities related to residency programs.

MENTORING AND ROLE MODELS

We often speak of the role model, one who serves as an example to be imitated and whose qualities are revered, one to whom we show respect and deference. A mentor is most often defined with Homer’s Odyssey in which a friend to whom Odysseus felt loyal and attached was trusted with his house as well as the education and care of Telemachus. This friend was surely a wise counselor for Odysseus because he had the confidence to hand over his valued treasures while setting out for Troy. It seemed that several respondents to Dr. Olson’s survey wished for a mentor similar to the one entrusted by Odysseus.

I have been fortunate in having a number of role models and mentors as well as experiences that contributed positively to my development, both as a person and a professional. My first role model was my father, Roy Parker. I recall staying out late one night, at age sixteen in 1952, and then not being willing to rise at my father’s call the next morning. After a period of time, he came back to the house to wake me again. Some time passed and I finally got up and slowly sauntered to the barn. The cows had already been milked by my father, and he was washing the milking equipment when he saw me coming. He, in his hurried and purposeful manner, met me about halfway and said, “Willis, I don’t care if you do anything today but at least act like you are going to.” His idea was that if a person was up early and looked busy, surely work would be done. Yes, he was my role model.

Later, at age nineteen on a chilly October morning in Kassel, Germany in 1955, an experience of a different nature had another lasting impression on me. My battalion was enroute to the Baltic Sea to practice firing its 90mm anti-aircraft guns. Still remaining from World War II were the old airfield runways covered with steel sheets where we bivouacked. About six hundred and fifty men were climbing out of their sleeping bags in preparation for reveille and a cold breakfast. Nearby, some soldiers dug a hole about the size of a grave. This hole would be the depository for our uneaten food. As I looked toward the horizon I saw the rising sun but also a few old women and children coming toward us. They came dressed in thick garb and scarves, carrying small brown paper bags. The children slid into the hole and the old women handed down the bags to be filled with the bacon, eggs and toast that we had discarded. I had never seen humanity in such distress before that morning. People were in need of food, and we were throwing it away. Later, I began to ponder the kind of model we were displaying that day. I also pondered the model that placed them into such dire circumstances.
After my military service and I returned home to Coatesville, Dr. Garth Keller, a swine practitioner at nearby Stilleyville, learned of my interest in veterinary medicine. He encouraged me to enroll in the pre-veterinary curriculum at the University of Illinois because there was no school in Indiana. He thought I would have a better opportunity being accepted into the veterinary school if I didn't have to compete as an out-of-state transfer. During my freshman year at Illinois, the Indiana legislature appropriated funds for a new veterinary school at Purdue. I returned home and started my sophomore year at Purdue.

Dr. Keller welcomed me often to observe his practice. When I graduated in 1964 and went home to establish a solo practice next to his, I wondered what difficulties might arise. At that time, much of his practice involved annual vaccination of thousands of hogs against the hog cholera disease. It was also a time when the disease was being eradicated from the nation, and his practice needed to change if it was to survive. He accepted me despite bringing new competition through skills such as those focused on cattle reproduction and palpation. I shall never forget his openness, professional integrity and unselfishness. He was a model for me to remember.

During my veterinary training at Purdue University from 1960-1964, my teachers were excellent role models and served as informal mentors. For example, Dr. Harold Amstutz taught large animal medicine, while Dr. James Callahan and Dr. Richard Herschler taught reproduction. The former two had been associated with Dr. Vernon Tharp and the latter with Dr. Raimunds Zemjans before coming to Purdue. They were highly confident and competent teachers who had an abundance of serious enthusiasm. (I recall on occasion, I would skip class to go on a trip with Dr. Herschler to examine some dairy cows. However, I dared not skip Dr. Amstutz's large animal medicine class!) These teachers' interest in my association with them extended beyond my years at Purdue. For instance, about two months after graduation, I got a call from Dr. Herschler asking if I would go to Indianapolis to assist in an exploratory abdominal surgery on a valuable Guernsey cow at the Normandy farm. The cow had developed extensive lymphosarcoma. Also while at Coatesville, where I had established a general practice in my hometown in central Indiana, I recall Dr. Callahan, accompanied, by Dr. Charles Martin coming to my practice. Dr. Martin was on a post doctoral degree program and later returned to the University of Missouri.

I was fortunate to have had Dr. Omar Radostits as a teacher, too. He taught physical diagnosis. His approach toward a systematic examination, his thoroughness to a fault, his appreciation for detail and his patience in spending time with the sick animal led to a correct diagnosis. I recall finding him sitting on the stall curbing, one late afternoon, as students hurried back and forth across the wards. He said, "Willis, come over here and look at this cow. How can one make a diagnosis unless time is devoted toward learning what is being presented?"

While at Purdue, I also enjoyed the medical writing course taught by Dean Erskine Morse and the frugal "gentle doctor" approach that large animal surgeon Dr. John Bullard fostered. He had taught my father in a veterinary science short course in 1930. Dr. Bill Tietz and Dr. Terry Curtain were role models of young veterinarians in graduate studies. Both later became Deans at Colorado State University and North Carolina State University, respectively. Also, Dr. Tietz was later president of Montana State University.

All of these gentlemen were, indeed, excellent role models from whom I learned not just content but how to conduct myself professionally. They made a lasting impression, at least in part, because they helped their students to succeed by consistently including them in their work of the day and by following up after graduation. I was extremely fortunate to continue to have outstanding role models and mentors when I assumed my responsibilities at ABS on August 31, 1965, where I joined Dr. David Bartlett, who was then Head of the Veterinary Department and Dr. Lester Larson, Associate Veterinarian, with whom I would share clinical duties for twenty years.

When Dr. Bartlett's offer to join American Breeders Service as a staff veterinarian came in 1965, terminating a practice in the rural village of Coatesville, with a population of 500, to move to Wisconsin
was a very difficult decision. The Coatesville community expected that I would be there for life, because I was a “home town boy” who had come home to practice. It was assumed that I would follow Dr. C. A. Masten. He had been at Coatesville since the 1920’s and, at over eighty years old, was only making farm calls if the farmer came to get him. He, too, had hoped I would come home. With the ABS opportunity in hand, I sought counsel with Dr. Harold Amstutz and Dr. Vernon Tharp. Both encouraged me to make the move to Wisconsin, because it was an opportunity that probably would not come my way again. My father was not enthused because I was an only son. He had farmed with his father for many years and had hoped that my interest in agriculture would be a mix between the farm and a veterinary practice. I should mention here, however, that after my parents had visited us in Wisconsin a few times and had an opportunity to meet my mentors, my father made the following observation: “Now I know why you were interested in ABS. Dr. Larson seems like a father.” My father thought I was in good hands.

The decision to move resulted in a somber feeling when we left Coatesville. My family and I left with only $6.50 unpaid to the practice. The last week of practice, I did not bill clients. After moving to Wisconsin, these last clients brought money to my parents who sent it to me. This community was a model to respect, to revere, to remember and to cherish. I wondered if the community would understand and, if another veterinarian came to town, whether the community would be so supportive again. Linda and I started the trend. We were the first in our families to earn advanced degrees and it led to migration away from grandparents—and the decision to move sent a void within my being that I have not quite forgotten.

The offer to join the ABS staff was premature, I thought. I had been in general practice only one year. I believed that new graduates should devote a few years to practice before branching out into more specialized work. This experience gives added creditability for those destined to work in academia, government, industry or the military. Nevertheless, I began a journey with two fine mentors who had carefully planned model programs that I would soon learn to respect.

Dr. Bartlett shared with us the leadership model for administration, research and development. He, with determination and foresight, established priorities that focused upon the bull but were really for the cow. Upon my arrival at ABS, I thought the focus would be upon the bull because I could see 350 of them in the barns. However, I soon learned from my mentors that the focus was beyond our doors. The focus was upon someone else’s door, the farmer’s door. I learned that our bull health programs were to be designed and implemented in a way that resulted in no harm to the cow. I learned that, just because the bull’s semen was frozen to liquid nitrogen temperature and the spermatozoa survived, surely pathogens, if present, might just retain their “heart beats,” too. Thus, extra-ordinary procedures were adopted to enhance the opportunity to use known pathogen-free frozen semen that would result in normal fertility when placed in a hygienic manner into a normal cycling cow.

Our work at ABS was service oriented and complimentary with others. We had to make sure that important genetics would be available for the national and international herds. We worked closely with the geneticists who made the bull selections. There were times when their selections did not make entry into ABS because of a questionable health status. We strove to select bulls that were capable of producing large amounts of high-quality semen. In my early employment, Dr. Bartlett told me that he and Dr. Larson had examined about ten Shorthorn bulls before finding one that was acceptable. He said, “Willis, don’t forget, if you identify a problem in a bull, it will remain with the bull. The problem will not go away just because the bull is transported to an AI Center.” Cattle breeders had a tendency to believe that once a problem bull came to an AI Center, healing would occur. Expectations were often unrealistic.

Dr. Bartlett was also a role model and mentor when it came to professionalism and “doing the job right.” I recall working in the laboratory setting up some semen plasma aggregation tests and had put a pencil on my ear. Dr. Bartlett happened to be passing by and looked in to make a greeting. Upon seeing me he said, “Willis, you are not a grocery clerk but a veterinarian.” The pencil went into my shirt pocket. I recall some of the first correspondence that I composed. It was policy that letters didn’t leave the veterinary department without a colleague’s review. Mine were returned and returned by Dr. Bartlett or Dr. Larson.
with all kinds of red marks. They left the impression that there would be several drafts before one would be satisfactory. I recall the first few weeks at ABS when I was called to see an injured bull in group housing. Dr. Bartlett asked about the case, and I indicated some things that would be appropriate but that the herdsman hedged about implementing primarily because of a late afternoon inconvenience. Dr. Bartlett guided me into realizing that since I had been called to the case, I should follow through with the appropriate treatment regardless of the tenure status of the herdsman or the extended hours that might be required.

Dr. Bartlett was a mentor in regard to ethical issues as well. Upon arriving at the new job, I was advised that meal receipts were not needed for expense reports. I asked Dr. Bartlett, “What happens if I eat hamburgers and charge for a steak?” He simply answered, “You’ll get tired of hamburgers.” I can recall some other advice that came soon after arriving at ABS. Dr. Bartlett said that it was always wise to keep a suitcase packed and try not to get our family into a situation where we couldn’t move if the need ever arose. Unknown to us at the time was a bull in the population infected with tuberculosis that was anergic to the tuberculin caudal fold intradermal test three times by different veterinarians. This was the largest outbreak of bovine tuberculosis ever recorded in the artificial insemination industry. I recall Dr. Bartlett telling me that I and many others might not have a job. It was devastating to hear just three months after closing a practice, but Dr. Bartlett’s forthrightness was a sign of a good mentor.

In 1965, I was the youngest veterinarian ever to have been involved in such a disastrous outbreak in the nation, and I learned much from the experience. I can recall the integrity and thoroughness with which Dr. Bartlett and Dr. Larson worked with regulatory officials, Drs. A. F. Ranney, A. R. McLaughlin, A. A. Erdman and A. I. Moyle, to rid the disease from the premises. My mentors’ openness with cattle owners, extension people, the artificial insemination industry, and government officials led me to believe I was with the right team. I recall being in Milwaukee when the tuberculin responding bulls were slaughtered and lesions were found in the thoracic tissues. I recall Dr. Larson carefully collecting all the reproductive tracts and taking them to an independent pathologist at the Federal-State Animal Diagnostic Laboratory to get a third-party diagnosis. No lesions were found in these tissues. The company survived due in large measure to Dr. Bartlett and Dr. Larson’s efforts, and this event molded my attitude and determination to practice disease prevention in a super-cautious way.

Dr. Larson was also a superior mentor and role model. He was known as a task master while on faculty at the University of Minnesota before coming to ABS in 1958. I can recall meeting some of his former students at the annual Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association meetings. They would ask me, “How do you work with that guy? He was so demanding and had such high expectations for us.” Yes, Dr. Larson set high standards, and I recall with gratitude some characteristics that describe my mentor: thoroughness, near perfection, long hours, dedication, loyalty, scientifically grounded, honest, fair and uncompromising on principles until other solid information was available. He arrived early mornings at the office before me and seldom left the office until I left. I can recall planning to arrive at the office very early only to find that he had already arrived. He gave himself to the job. He was disciplined.

Dr. Larson never expected more of others than he was willing to do himself. I learned this very soon after arriving at ABS during the first bull examination trip I took with him in September of 1965. We drove from Madison, WI, starting after the work day, arriving at a motel in Pennsylvania about 2:00 a.m. We were back on the road about 6:00 a.m. and arrived at 9:00 at a farm near Clymer, New York to examine a mature Holstein bull. Dr. Larson set up his equipment in the milk house, and the bull was examined and semen collected very efficiently. The examination form was filled out completely at the farm so as not to miss any details. We then drove to Cortland, NY to examine some young Holstein bulls. We had supper and drove all night to Jackson, MI to examine a mature Guernsey bull at the local prison herd at 10:00 a.m., then drove on to Madison, WI without further delay. The herdsmen at the ABS barns asked me how I liked the trip. They knew that I was in for a “Dr. Larson experience.” When traveling, I noticed that Dr. Larson stayed in the lower cost but safe motels. Years later, he commented about our frugal ways by indicating that ABS had not lost money from our travel arrangements over the years. This same
situation arose last April when I went to Ukraine upon invitation from one of their AI Centers through Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA). I was going to be placed in a high-cost hotel. I simply refused to sleep in such costly accommodations, so more reasonably priced accommodations were found. What would Dr. Larson have done? I could hear my mentor's footsteps.

Of high priority to Dr. Larson was the subject of sanitation. He said, "It is not clean until it's clean to the bare surface and then it can be disinfected." A lot of effort and energy were given toward having very clean barns and laboratory. He would always clean equipment, sinks, and counter tops after use and never leave them for others to clean as I had observed in other situations. Some years after he had retired, some visitors arrived at ABS to tour the bull barns. They made an inquiry, wondering if the barns had just been cleaned for their visit. This was a great compliment. Daily the barns appeared neat, clean and well ventilated regardless of when visitors might arrive. At that moment, I knew Dr. Larson would have been pleased to know that the facilities were being maintained at his standards. A role model, indeed, for all who had the privilege to be associated with him.

Both of my mentors set high standards, but they were attainable standards that gave a forward vision for entry into the profession. They also promoted and guided my continued professional development by introducing me to regulatory veterinarians and taking me to meetings to meet other colleagues. My mentors challenged me and were trusting. About three years after arriving at ABS, I thought of leaving to pursue further graduate training but had told no one. In the spring of 1969, Dr. Bartlett called me to his office and offered the opportunity to send me to graduate school at the University of Wisconsin while maintaining the job. He was an intuitive person. One of my classmates was Dr. Howard Whitmore. We shared an advisor, Dr. L. E. Cassida. ABS was entering into a five-year program to develop frozen stallion semen. We had a band of 200 mares and several stallions to conduct some pioneering studies in mare reproductive physiology. My thesis was to be the first large-scale scientific study on spermatozoa transport in the mare. These studies were the stimulus for and the forerunner of the equine reproductive studies that were to develop at the University of Wisconsin in Dr. Oliver Ginther's laboratory and at Colorado State University in Dr. William Pickett's laboratory. Then in 1974, my mentors sent Dr. John Sullivan and I to Austria to evaluate some Lippizaner stallions and select one for export and to go on to Cambridge University to report our research findings at the First International Symposium Upon Equine Reproduction. It was that year when I was also given the opportunity to move to Colorado to become a team member in building a new AI bull center. These are only a few examples of the challenges and opportunities that were systematically offered.

Indeed, Dr. Bartlett and Dr. Larson were the best of mentors, and their actions fit the description of a successful mentoring process. Mentoring should be done by a trusted and experienced person who takes a direct and personal interest in the development and education of a younger or inexperienced person. Mentors should use their knowledge and feeling for humanity to help protégés grow into their potential. Author Judy Ann Krupp¹ suggests that mentoring should be a positive force that contributes to one's capacity for loving, learning and laboring. She further observes that organizations gain because protégés feel special, protégés become more knowledgeable and productive, employees perceive that the organization practices humaneness, better work is accomplished, involvement in the group increases, employees deal better with stress and absenteeism decreases.

Now I ask you, what is your present situation? Have you taken seriously, either informally or formally, the need to be a mentor to the next generation? At the top of the stairs or on a prominent door in your workplace, do you have a full-length mirror that you and your colleagues can view each day? A sign could be placed at the top of the mirror that would read, "Take a moment to reflect on yourself." Educational consultants, Ginny Lee and Bruce Barnett², believe mentors should, from time to time, learn to ask reflective questions that are not tainted with judgment. Mentors need to learn that it isn't necessary

to always ask the right question, but to rely more on creating opportunities for the protégé to think aloud and construct meaning for themselves. Such experiences provide the opportunity for the protégés to reach certain conclusions that may or may not be in harmony with those of the mentor. It is the mentor’s duty to probe further, if need be, the reason for a dissenting viewpoint. It might be more appropriate than conventional thought. This unique “talking together” technique also provides a good listening period to hear the protégé. When conducted correctly, this strategy is not used to continually correct deficiencies but to offer opportunities for growth. It is during these moments that protégés develop confidence in their mentors. This is a building block for trust and builds confidence that people often need and want.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: A MODEL FOR GROWTH

One of the fruits of being at ABS was the opportunity, through my mentors, to participate in professional organizations such as being able to observe the development of the Society for Theriogenology and The American College of Theriogenologists. When I took the board examinations in 1976, I can recall driving to Oconomowoc, WI, where Dr. Elmer Woelffer proctored the written portion. I wrote for nine hours, and enjoyed a lunch prepared by Mrs. Woelffer. This experience led to a twenty-year friendship. They are missed today.

The opportunity to serve as treasurer, vice president and president of ACT, the latter being in 1983-84, contributed to my professional growth. In return, it is my hope that my efforts during my tenure in those offices, particularly when I served as president, contributed to the growth of this organization. Three things happened that year, the first being the proposal that the ACT annual meeting be moved from the AVMA convention and be held in conjunction with the Society for Theriogenology’s annual meeting. In prior years, it was observed that attendance at our annual meeting, held in conjunction with the AVMA convention, was low. I pondered how attendance might be improved. Although diplomats retained membership in SFT and AVMA, they attended the SFT meeting more often than the AVMA meeting. This was a risky proposal to consider. I was not sure how the charter diplomats, and particularly the organizing committee led by my mentor, Dr. Bartlett, would respond. They had persuaded the AVMA in 1971 to accept a new ACT and perhaps the tie was still too fresh and too binding to be severed. But the fact remained that higher attendance was needed if long-term interest was to be kindled in a growing ACT membership.

A second change that was promoted during my tenure was related to the selection of officers and executive board members. Officers and executive board members were being selected by the few people who attended the annual meeting. It was reasoned that if a mail-in ballot could be developed, all diplomats would take ownership in their organization. More participation would be healthy. This is now part of the ACT constitution. It was an important change because active participation results in growth for the individual as well as the organization.

Third, there seemed to be a need to have a focal spot sometime during the SFT meeting to highlight some veterinary achievement. This vehicle, which would help tie SFT and ACT together to nurture each other, was to become the David E. Bartlett Lecture Award. I still have in my files the letters to the organizing committee members, except Dr. Bartlett, asking advice on this idea. All were very supportive. I made numerous calls to charter members to test the “water temperature.” I can remember calling Dr. John Williams about the idea. I said, “John, what if Dr. Bartlett won’t accept it?” and John said, “Just tell him we’re going to lay it on him anyway.”

The ACT executive board members who struggled with my risk taking were Drs. Bruce Abbitt, William Cates, Maarten Drost, Jerry Olson, Randy Ott, Howard Whitmore and Robert Youngquist. Dr. Edwin Lindner, president of SFT, provided the leadership with his board to endorse and embrace two of the three changes that were to favorably affect SFT programs. These boards’ foresight offered a model for change that focused upon what would be beneficial to the professional growth of their membership. A cooperative and harmonious venture was begun that has yielded generous fruit. For example, changes
that occurred in 1995, during Dr. Chester Rawson and Dr. Jerry Rains’ leadership of ACT and SFT, respectively, were heartening and progressive. Additionally, their collaboration with Dr. Michelle LeBlanc and Dr. Reuben Mapleton to develop the “Theriogenology Lecture and Outreach Fund” is noteworthy.

INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS: A MUTUAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

Contacts with and visits to international veterinary institutions provide another model for continued professional growth for everyone involved. I have visited nine veterinary faculties outside of North America. Some of these resulted after the fall of the “Iron Curtain” in 1989-90 when veterinarians and animal scientists hurried to develop contacts in the West. Some showed up almost immediately in our veterinary office at ABS and at other public institutions. Most were unknown to us. They, in turn, issued invitations to visit them if opportunities became available.

In 1991, the veterinary faculty at Tartu, Estonia issued a formal invitation to me. It was soon withdrawn because they could not assure my safety, but it was issued again in 1992. There was little money available, however, and the trip was contingent upon my providing my own airfare, then they would provide in-country transportation, room and food. I bought a round trip ticket to Helsinki, arranged to visit colleagues in Helsinki and asked the Estonians to arrange with the Latvians and Lithuanians a visit to their faculties. I recall talking with Dr. Raimunds Zemjanis about a Latvian faculty contact at Jelgava. I had already met the Latvian Minister of Agriculture at ABS, and I had developed a contact with the Lithuanian veterinary faculty during an ABS trip to Kaunas and Vilnius in 1990. The Baltic colleagues, now allowed to communicate, provided exceptional hosting. In 1990 I met Dr. Henrikas Zilinskas, Lithuanian theriogenologist, who had just returned from Sweden after completing Dr. Ingemar Setterrigen’s nine-month course in reproductive physiology and pathology for veterinarians from developing countries. This course was the continuation of one established by Dr. Nils Lagerlof in 1954. Dr. Zilinskas was the first Baltic veterinarian to go abroad! Others have followed. The late Dr. Lagerlof and now Dr. Setterrigen and staff at Uppsala, Sweden need to be recognized for providing educational opportunities for a large number of veterinarians in dozens of other countries over forty years. This trip provided the contacts needed to initiate the Dr. Raimunds Zemjanis Memorial Education Project in 1995.

During my visits to the Baltic countries’ veterinary faculties, I saw first hand their need for Western veterinary literature. The libraries were empty. Upon my return home, I enlisted the generosity of many colleagues who contributed over 800 volumes of used veterinary books, which were gathered and sent to the Baltic schools. Additionally, Dr. Zemjanis and the librarian at the University of Minnesota began to forward duplicate veterinary literature to Latvia. SFT has generously supplied the manuals that were developed for the various species and proceedings from annual meetings. I hand carried three autographed copies of Dr. Stephen Roberts’ book, Genital Disease and Obstetrics (Theriogenology), as a gift to each Baltic veterinary faculty from SFT and ACT. I recall Dean Aadu Kolk at the Tartu, Estonia school saying that this gift was the best that could be given. Dean Peteris Keidans, Jelgava, Latvia and Dean Rimatas Karazija, Kaunas, Lithuania had similar responses of gratitude. Upon retirement, I gave my library to the school in Lithuania. Dr. Lester Larson has recently given his library to the school in Estonia. Dr. Douglas Mitchell is coordinator for the Commonwealth Veterinary Association Book Project. It supplies textbooks to thirty-two developing member countries. These have been precious gifts.

In April of this year, I made a VOCA-sponsored visit to Ukraine upon invitation from an AI Center at Lubny. Additionally, I took the initiative to go to Belaya Tserkov University’s veterinary faculty. I met Dr. C. Gregory, head of the reproduction department. He invited me to give a lecture to the fourth-year students. I was the first American to have visited these locations. At Kiev State Agricultural University, an opportunity was provided to address the second-year students in the AI course. I learned from my recent survey that Dr. Victor Schille was in Kiev in 1991 and 1992 to provide lectures to Zoopark Veterinary Service.
In April 1993, I went on an agricultural mission to the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India in Sri Lanka. This country has been in a protracted civil war for more than ten years. Upon arrival and after several days of waiting, clearance was obtained from the government to travel into the rural areas. During travel to reach the various villages, it became clear my objectives were not going to be accomplished. At military check points along the roads, my official clearance to proceed was denied. As an alternative, I went to Peradeniya University to see the veterinary school. There I met Dean Vijitha Y. Kuruvita, a Ph.D. theniogenologist trained by Dr. Keith Lapwood and Dr. E. C. Fielden at Massey University. Dr. Lapwood is a contributor to Dr. David Morrow’s book, Current Therapy in Theriogenology. I took a copy of Dr. Morrow’s book and gave it to Dean Kuruvita as a gift from SFT and ACT. Also, I met Dr. Indra Abeygunawardena, a Ph.D. microbiologist who trained under Dr. M. Ristic in 1982-1987 at the University of Illinois. She told me that her husband had been a student under Dr. William Wagner at the same time.

Because of my increasing interest in international veterinary exchange opportunities as a result of the above experiences, I initiated a survey concerning the international activities of ACT diplomats last March. Sixty-one responses were received. Three questions were of particular interest.

- Q. How often do you communicate with an international colleague or organization?
  - A. Rarely or never 18(29%), daily or weekly 12(20%), monthly 22(36%), 1-6X yearly 9(15%).
- Q. Do you favor international involvement by ACT for projects?
  - A. Yes 55(90%), Undecided 4(6.6%), No 2(3.4%).
- Q. What countries have you visited in you professional work?
  - A. Sixty countries had been visited and ten diplomats listed continents rather than countries

One can readily see the vast number of veterinary contacts that we have throughout the world. Diplomats are beginning to communicate frequently, and they have a high interest in ACT becoming more involved with their international colleagues. If an annual report could be published by ACT providing names of colleagues, their addresses and the reason for diplomat travel to other countries, others could have access to these contacts as their own travel plans develop. Bringing greetings to others is just one of several advantages in building meaningful relationships with our global profession. Another positive effect would be to identify projects that are being developed to minimize redundancy and perhaps reduce costs. There is a tremendous network among us.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

In closing I want to issue a challenge. New graduate veterinarians often seem detached from the “umbilical cord” that fed them in the professional curriculum. Teachers are immersed in training the next class, so keeping track of the previous class, now dispersed, is a monumental task. However, I challenge you to counsel with your students and encourage them to contact you at least once a year and for you to contact them at least once a year. Learn what your former students are contributing to the public good. Go visit them in their work environment and/or send them a fax message from time to time. Be a role model and mentor beyond graduation to those few students who have a high interest in theriogenology. Be a role model for the profession to emulate. Social learning theory indicates that modeling is very effective for initial acquisition of a behavior or a skill, but reinforcement is necessary for its maintenance over time. Keep in touch!

In addition, I want to endorse part of Dr. Elmer Woelffer’s 1986 Bartlett Lecture Award address. He said, “I have always felt that the women, be they wives of veterinarians or female veterinarians, always add character and dignity to our meetings.” It is very important that we male diplomats continue to support our female colleagues for executive board and committee responsibilities. I am very pleased that you have in the past. Within our membership we have women capable of becoming Deans of our veterinary institutions and assuming other significant administrative positions throughout the profession. When will it happen? I need to mention in particular Dr. Shirley Johnston and Dr. Patricia Olson, two past
presidents, whose contributions have brought richness to ACT and to the profession. Their courage and efforts to correct the gender issues in the workplace are admirable. Our institutions should have already corrected such deficiencies without being prodded. We need to be supportive to the point of rendering resolutions supporting remedies to correct common practices that are unfair, unjust or demeaning in the workplace. I hope ACT will continue to lead the way in ensuring that there is opportunity for all of our diverse membership to participate in some part of the College activities in the coming years.

I also want to comment about veterinary practitioners who aspire to become diplomates and to those who are diplomates. If one recalls the purpose for the founding of ACT, you will find that practitioners are to be encouraged and pursued for diplomate status. It is very difficult for them to succeed compared to veterinarians in residency programs and graduate research positions. When they do earn diplomate status, it is important that we include them in the nomination and appointment process to assure participation on the Board and committees. You have allowed that to happen. Let us continue to nominate and elect a mix of colleagues that represent our rich diversity.

For future projects, let us consider intentionally becoming more active internationally by sponsoring an international colleague or one of their students to attend our annual meetings. Let us consider developing some medals to honor new diplomates, to recognize the practitioner or other special categories. Let us consider inviting our counterpart physicians to some of our meetings or maybe even consider a joint meeting on certain topics. Let us develop some slide sets and distribute them to veterinary faculties in other countries devoid of such simple teaching aids. From the survey, diplomates have suggested that ACT have an international affairs committee, consider sending diplomates to developing countries or exchanging students, publishing our proceedings in other languages, identifying diplomates who would translate languages, or have a home page on the Internet. These suggestions could highlight achievements of colleagues at the grassroots level, provide bridges of communication and furnish useful educational materials to those who have limited access to the literature.

Before my final remarks, I want to express my appreciation to those who have touched my life—to my wife, Linda, son Eric and daughter Lisa, whose achievements have brought satisfaction to me and benefits to society; to my father, now deceased, and mother who were my first role models and to mother, Doris, who lives the faith; to my mentors, Dr. Bartlett and Dr. Larson, and their wives; to my twin sister, Willa Dean, who has been a charm; to those in this marvelous profession such as pioneers like Drs. John Simons, Lloyd Faulkner, C. J. Bierschwal, Robert Hudson and particularly Dr. Stephen Roberts, who identified other pioneers in his marvelous 1985 lecture; to the late Mr. Bob Garey and Mr. Don Ellerbee and associates; and to a model teacher of my high school years, Mr. Morris Pollard.

As I begin to close my active professional journey and recall the many meaningful experiences over the last six decades, I'm reminded of some words by Dr. Fredrick L. Hovde, President of Purdue University from 1946-1971. He said, "Someday, when your working days have ended and you review your performance, if you can honestly say you did your part, then you will have deserved your education." I hope that I have deserved mine.

I am genuinely grateful to the College for this honor and opportunity.

Thank you very much.