



## IN MEMORIAM

Harold Roosevelt (Hal) Parker  
Professor of Veterinary Medicine, Emeritus  
Davis  
1920 — 2003

It is with sadness that we review the life of Hal Parker, who died at home in the presence of loved ones on July 31, 2003 at the age of 83. Hal was a longtime faculty member of the School of Veterinary Medicine from 1960 to his retirement in 1987.

Hal was born and raised on a small farm in Southern California and attended L.A. City College and UCLA with the intention of becoming a physician. He served in the Pacific theater as a navigator in B-29s, and the most exciting event in his military career was leading a flight of B-29s above the battleship Missouri during the surrender process. They could clearly see General Douglas MacArthur with other dignitaries and knew that the war was finally over.

Dr. Parker returned to L.A. City College, where he met his future wife Annette Dietsch. He transferred to UCLA, where he learned that the University of California was about to open a veterinary school in Davis. He enrolled as a pre-veterinary student at what was then UC Berkeley's University Farm (now UC Davis). As founder and president of the Pre-Veterinary Student Association, he participated in the ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of the first veterinary school building, Haring Hall, on what was then the edge of the Davis campus. Hal was a member of the very first class of veterinary students admitted to the University of California School of Veterinary Medicine and graduated in 1952. After graduation, Hal started a large and small animal veterinary practice in Watsonville. However, severe allergies led him to return to Davis and enroll in a graduate program in animal physiology. His doctoral thesis was on the interaction of the adrenal and thyroid glands in newborn calves as related to the problem of prolonged gestation in dairy cattle. Upon completion of his Ph.D. degree in 1960, he was hired as an assistant professor in the Department of Physiological Sciences. Dr. Parker spent his first few years involved mainly in teaching physiology and research. He was remembered by his former students as a tough, but thorough, innovative, and practical instructor. He was especially helpful to students seeking his personal advice and assistance, and who shared his love of physiology and veterinary medicine.

In addition to his research in physiology, Hal retained his strong clinical interest. He was appointed as the first chairman of the Continuing Education Program. Veterinary medical knowledge at all levels was rapidly increasing and many areas were developing into clinical specialties. Recognizing this fact, Dr. Parker was instrumental in organizing the first clinical specialty continuing education programs. Specialists from UC Davis and other schools presented cutting edge knowledge to veterinarians in private practice throughout California.

In 1973 Hal was invited to transfer to the Department of Surgery to help in the development of the first program of intensive care for small animals. He worked closely with a departmental colleague, Dr. Steve Haskins, to develop the first lecture and laboratory courses that involved application of basic physiology to the problems of critical care of small animal patients. He and Dr. Haskins worked tirelessly to develop an operational intensive care unit and to organize a new Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) service that for the first time provided 24 hour, 7 day a week emergency care for seriously ill companion animals. Dr. Parker was unquestionably one of the founding fathers of veterinary critical care medicine.

All of his students, friends, and colleagues recall Hal's talent for problem solving, especially involving improvised and homemade medical instrumentation. If a piece of equipment was needed but not commercially available, he would design and build it himself. He vastly improved commercially developed oxygen cages for small animals and did much of the initial work on peritoneal dialysis in small animals, which provided a solid foundation for the School's later pioneering programs in hemodialysis. His research in the areas of abnormal renal function and fluid and electrolyte balance serve as the scientific base for the development of many treatment protocols for critical care patients still in use in the Intensive Care Unit of the VMTH. Veterinarians and their animal patients around the world are beneficiaries of the ideas, techniques and equipment developed or modified by Hal Parker.

Hal Parker's ability to find innovative solutions and to build or modify medical devices came from his father, who was a carpenter and taught Hal the trade. He applied this perspective to many of the veterinary school's new and old buildings. He served as Coordinator of Physical Planning for the school for many years. His talents for construction were also applied to his own home. With an expanding family that would include five daughters, he remodeled or expanded nearly every room in his home.

Hal Parker was a devoted husband and father and had a large extended family of brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins. He loved fishing, camping and traveling. He and the family enjoyed sabbatical leaves in Seattle, San Diego, Hawaii, Australia and Japan.

Hal will be deeply missed by his family and all of his colleagues at UC Davis. His legacy to the School of Veterinary Medicine is one of great dedication, innovation and vision. He oversaw and played a key role in the development of modern veterinary medicine, from a time when specialties did not exist to the present when specialization has become the norm. He played a founding role in emergency medicine and in pioneering ways to treat renal failure in animals. We also remember his loyalty, his kind manner, and his love for the profession.

Gary Carlson  
Niels Pedersen  
Gene Steffey