



IN MEMORIAM

Robert Morgan Cello
Professor of Veterinary Medicine, Emeritus
Davis
1921 — 2001

Robert M. Cello (Bob) who was a member of the School of Veterinary Medicine faculty during its formative and developing years, died of complications of myelogenous leukemia May 20, 2001 at the age of 79.

His contributions to the School were of exceptional leadership in transforming and developing the veterinary clinical programs from a small departmental activity to a nationally recognized academic clinical teaching center unmatched in the U.S. He also made important contributions to campus governance and administration as chair of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate and as vice chancellor for Academic Affairs.

Born in Pennsylvania, he was raised in Staten Island, New York where he attended high school in Great Kills. He enrolled in Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania which he attended before enlisting in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942. He received pilot training and served as a B-26 bomber flight instructor before overseas duty in late 1944. He flew combat missions in Europe with the Ninth Air Force.

He returned to Dickinson College receiving a B.S. degree in 1947 after which he enrolled at Cornell University where he received the degree Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 1951.

After receiving the D.V.M. degree, Bob joined the faculty of the University of California, Davis as lecturer in veterinary medicine and assistant specialist in the Experiment Station assuming responsibility as a clinician and teacher of companion animal medical practice for the School's first class of veterinary students. After a year, dissatisfied with the program at the School, Bob decided to enter private veterinary practice in Santa Rosa, California where he and his friend and classmate, Mike Schaffer, established a successful practice. Upon leaving the University, he expressed the hope to Dean George Hart that there be developed "a concrete program which will enable the clinic to develop a well trained group of young men capable of making a great contribution in the field of veterinary education." Two years later, 1954, Cello was recruited back to the faculty of the School by then Dean Jasper who foresaw that Bob would be a major implementer of such a program. He was indeed with great success a teacher, clinician, clinical scientist and administrator. He was clearly one of the intellectual leaders of the young faculty in the School's early years.

He was the leader in establishing the School's courses in companion animal medicine. Bob was an exceptional teacher, well versed and vigorous in the organization and presentation of the full range of medical diseases and conditions of companion animals. One of Bob's avocations was performing in musical comedies, operettas and plays. He enriched his lectures with the style and articulate expression gained from this experience. He received a campus citation "as the most distinguished teacher in the first five years of faculty membership" and received other citations as Outstanding Instructor, School of Veterinary Medicine, 1971 and Outstanding Educators of America, 1973.

Bob's commanding personality, his dedication to teaching and his talents in acting performances were indeed extended to the art of practice of veterinary medicine. Here his use of skill, creativity and scientific knowledge in the clinics with patient history taking, diagnosis, management and client relations were among his highest achievements as a teacher. He demanded much from his students and became a role model and

inspiration for them. Many of his former students and colleagues recognized this by honoring him after his retirement by endorsing the R.M. Cello Distinguished Lecture Series and Resident's Research Fund to support programs in perpetuity to which he was so strongly committed.

Cello's early clinical research interests and activities covered a broad spectrum of clinical problems in dogs and cats, consistent with problems encountered in the developing clinical practice of the School. They ranged from hyperinsulinism in dogs, virus respiratory diseases in cats, feline infectious anemia, electrolyte changes in interstitial nephritis and several topics involving the eye; bacteriology of conjunctivitis and keratitis, glaucoma of dogs, and monilia infections within the eye.

Gradually Cello's focus became veterinary ophthalmology, the study of which he pursued on sabbatical leaves at the University of Vienna, Austria and in continuing affiliation with the Proctor Eye Research Laboratory, School of Medicine, UC San Francisco. He founded the specialty of veterinary ophthalmology at Davis, was a charter Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists, American Veterinary Medical Association and earned national and international recognition in this field.

With the growth and maturation of the School of Veterinary Medicine from its founding in 1948, the clinical programs developed and expanded from departmentally based programs to multiple interdepartmental specialties that required consolidation within the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, VMTH. The VMTH became the clinical laboratory of the School dealing with all of the dimensions of the clinical teaching, research, clinical practice and service activities. Bob was appointed its first director and led the program in its many successes in improvement of patient care, the development of clinical specialties, the instruction of professional students, the creation of clinical residencies and encouragement of clinical research. The VMTH concept became a landmark for veterinary medicine initiated at UCD and copied nearly everywhere in academic veterinary institutions.

Bob maintained an interest in campus governance and activities throughout his career. He served on important Academic Senate, Davis Division Committees: Courses of Instruction, Teaching, Educational Policy, Student- Faculty Relationships, Academic Planning and Budget Review and Executive Council. His campus interests were diverse: Athletic Advisory Committee, Campus Arts and Lectures and Cal Aggie Foundation Board of Trustees, as examples. He was elected chair of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate serving in that capacity from 1980 to 1982, and was on the universitywide Academic Council and Academic Senate from 1980 to 1982. His campus and university service was extraordinary, unusually so for faculty from a professional school on a general campus. Bob's administrative achievements in faculty governance and veterinary school administration led to his selection and appointment as vice chancellor of Academic Affairs, UCD for the term 1982-87. He provided strong and highly respected leadership enjoyed by the whole campus community.

Over the years in Davis, Bob had a great impact in many community activities. He was president of the Davis Art Center and founded the Davis Comic Opera Company performing, directing and starring in many Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, musical comedies and plays. He served as a member of the City Parks and Recreation Commission and the Davis Art Commission, and he managed Little League and Babe Ruth baseball teams.

Bob was preceded in death by his wife of 50 years Irene Cello. He is survived by his daughter, Susanne Cello, and his sons Kris and his wife Kathy, Philip, and Stephen and his wife Kimberly, and grandchildren Ryan, Michael, Philip Jr., Sally, David and Stephanie.

Edward Rhode
John Pascoe
Peter Kennedy