



Dr. Robert Dougherty

## A Life of Achievement

Lynae Engelken\*

On September 29, 1989 Dr. Robert Dougherty, D.V.M., M.S., received the fourth Jakob Markowitz Award for his significant contributions to curative medicine through basic surgical research. This award is presented by the Academy of Surgical Research. One of the unique things about the Academy of Surgical Research is that it brings together outstanding veterinarians, medical doctors, and oral surgeons. Dr. Dougherty received this award with Dr. Thomas E. Starzl, the medical doctor who performed the first liver transplant.

Although Dr. Dougherty says his accomplishments are not nearly so great, they have definitely helped to establish the foundation upon

which the modern day livestock industry is based.

Dr. Dougherty grew up on a 500 acre farm in east central Ohio where he entered a small conference college to play football. While there he also lettered in baseball. After an athletic injury, he came to Iowa State College. He played baseball his freshman year but upon cracking an ankle bone, he decided to cease his athletic career and focus on his education. He graduated in 1927 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture.

He returned to the family farm and struggled during the depression to make ends meet. After five years, he entered the Ohio State Veterinary School. He graduated from Ohio State in 1936. He then spent six months at Virginia Technical Institute working on a Brucellosis program. He traveled to Oregon State where he says he worked for "five wonderful years."

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In 1942, he was called into the U.S. Army where he spent four years. Dr. Dougherty summed this up with, "although I'm glad of the experience, I certainly would not want it again." During this time, he saw a lot of cases of rabies and many tropical diseases. He was also called upon to treat the dog of General MacArthur.

After returning from the service, he spent two years in recovery and returned to Oregon State for a few weeks. Washington State then offered him a job teaching physiology. Dr. Dougherty was also in charge of their research program.

Dr. Dougherty then spent twelve years at Cornell University before coming to Ames. In Ames, he worked at the National Animal Disease Laboratory and served as a collaborator with Iowa State University. He served as a guest lecturer in Ruminant Physiology and also served on various graduate student committees. These graduate students did their research at NADC under Dr. Dougherty.

During these years, Dr. Dougherty showed an advanced understanding of ruminant gastrointestinal physiology. He developed surgical approaches hitherto unknown by emphasizing

the use of surgical models. He developed ruminant digestion techniques unique to veterinary medicine. He applied these surgical techniques for long-term placement of indwelling catheters, cannulae, and probes permitting either continuous measurement or obtaining frequent samples for analysis, or both, in undisturbed animals. His innovations allowed elimination of sampling and measurement variables.

He is the author of *Experimental Surgery in Farm Animals*, the only text on this topic. He has also published more than 80 journal articles and written chapters in 9 textbooks and one proceedings book. He also wrote the chapter on Diseases of Sheep in *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Dr. Dougherty and his wife, Ruth, have two children, Susan and Mike. He retired in 1971 and then taught for a year at North Carolina, a year at Tuskegee, and a semester at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. and Mrs. Dougherty live in rural Ames with their two cats, Patches and Friskie, and their dog, Greta. In his spare time, Dr. Dougherty enjoys woodworking and gardening. In past years, he spent his free time mountain climbing and skiing.

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