

Personal Recollections of Dr. H. Hugh Dukes

Melvin J. Swenson
Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology
College of Veterinary Medicine
Iowa State University

The first time that I heard of Dr. H. Hugh Dukes was in my undergraduate days in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Kansas State University from 1939-43. The 4th edition of *The Physiology of Domestic Animals* was used in the physiology courses. Little did I know at that time that Dr. Dukes would become a close personal friend of mine, an example to follow in the profession of veterinary medicine, and a wise counselor in veterinary physiology and allied fields.

During my time of 3½ years in the Veterinary Corps of the U.S. Army, I applied to the Research Council of the American Veterinary Medical Association for an A.V.M.A. Fellowship for graduate work at Iowa State University. At that time, Dr. Dukes was Secretary of the Research Council. He was the one who wrote me that I had been awarded the Fellowship.

After graduate work from 1946-50, there was a close association with Dr. Dukes at veterinary physiology workshops and seminars at colleges of veterinary medicine prior to the national meetings of the American Veterinary Medical Association. The veterinary physiologists and pharmacologists looked to Dr. Dukes for leadership and guidance. His demonstrations in living biology were given at these workshops.

In 1961, when Dr. Dukes retired from Cornell University, he returned to the Department of Veterinary Physiology and Pharmacology at Iowa State University. He had a great impact on junior high and senior high students through his physiology demonstrations. He also gave these and other demonstrations to veterinary medical students at Iowa State.

Dr. Dukes is remembered for his meticulous ways of setting up demonstrations for veterinary medical students and others. Each demonstration was well planned and explained carefully. The results were the same as those given in physiology textbooks. In planning these demonstrations, he needed to have the equipment, supplies, and animals readily available. It was always understood that faculty members, graduate students,

and others were not to move one item. He was respected and honored by all in keeping these items readily available for him.

We could always depend on Dr. Dukes. At times we knew his thoughts without a word being spoken. We knew where he stood on each issue. He meant what he said. He was goal oriented. He was an achiever. He did things that counted, and he knew how to achieve his goals in life. His determination brought him success in veterinary physiology. Dr. Dukes expected a great deal from people, and he gave his best in serving veterinary medical students, graduate students, and the community. Along with these traits, he had a certain graciousness called "Southern Hospitality" acquired early in life in his native state of South Carolina.

All of his work was not academic. He loved people. He provided such an inspiration to young people. Once when he was delivering some cockroaches for a science project to a junior high girl's home, a frightening event took place. A large cockroach jumped out of the jar onto the living room floor. The mother screamed. In a moment, he literally threw his body flat on the floor and captured the cockroach.

Life was enjoyable for Dr. and Mrs. Dukes. They celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary the day before his death on June 8, 1987. Their professional and home life may serve as models for us to follow. Although they did not have children, their home was filled with memories of hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty and many international veterinarians and other dignitaries.

There was a spiritual side to Dr. Dukes too. One of my last memories of Dr. Dukes was hearing him repeat the Lord's Prayer at his table in the dining hall of the Care Center where he lived at the time of his death. This is a reflection of his early training at home, church, and school to which he referred many times. Yes, Dr. Dukes is gone, but he lives on in the lives of students, faculty, and the profession of veterinary medicine.