

Al W. Stinson, BS, DVM, MS is a Professor Emeritus at Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine with a lifetime contribution to animal welfare issues through personal experience, academic training, military service, teaching and recreational activities. The following biography of his accomplishments in the realm of animal welfare gives testimony of his dedication, training, and contributions to those creatures who have become an important part of the human/animal bond.

He was born in a farmhouse in North Carolina and grew up with livestock, pets and wildlife. Throughout his entire life there were very few days that he was not involved in some way with animal welfare. Farm animals and pets were his playmates, his source of food and the recreational activities of hunting, animal breeding, and competitive exhibiting of livestock and pets.

The first purebred animal he owned was a Hampshire sow acquired for a project in the Future Farmers of America class as a freshman in high school. Throughout high school he bred a number of litters and learned the importance of care and management as well as the importance of the human/animal bond. This experience set the stage for future accomplishment in the fields of animal husbandry, veterinary medicine, and animal research.

In 1945, immediately following World War II, he enrolled in North Carolina State College along with many GI veterans of the war and began working for a bachelor degree in animal husbandry. To pay for his expenses, he became a herdsman for the college dairy herd of purebred Ayrshire cattle, a breed which he became very fond of because of their beauty and elegance. In fact, an Ayrshire bull was the first animal he exhibited in a livestock show competition at the 1948 North Carolina State Fair.

Friendships which developed during that period had a profound influence on his future development. The college veterinarian took an interest in his ambitions and played an important role in his veterinary education. When he took a job as a night clerk for the campus YMCA, at that time the equivalent of a Student Union, he became involved with campus religious activities. This resulted in very close association with the Director of the YMCA, the Dean of Student, and the Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture; individuals who have had a profound affect on his life and his dedication to social responsibility. Extra curricular activities with the YMCA and the association with the faculty and administration was the foundation of his belief in the importance of service organizations and the importance of volunteer participation for the common good. In his senior year he held the positions of President of the YMCA and the Editor of the N.C. State Handbook, a student publication on college activities. The editor's introduction is worth quoting because it is still an important reason for his activities:

"The State College Handbook is published in the hope that it will give you a clearer idea of the life in the collegiate world of which you are about to become

a member as a student at State College. If we succeed in picturing to you the traditions, ideals, and life at State the Handbook will have filled its purpose. And with the wishes that you may achieve the last full measure of college success we present the STATE COLLEGE HANDBOOK FOR 1948-1949.”

- THE EDITOR

Following graduation in 1949, he took a job as Assistant County Farm Agent in Carteret County, North Carolina. His challenge was to develop a livestock program in a county with a 90 mile coastline on the Atlantic Ocean where the fishing and shellfish industries predominated the agricultural scene. His work with 4-H clubs and their animals was a very rewarding experience and contributed to his future understanding of animals' contributions to human welfare.

The summer of 1950 brought the Korean War into the picture and he was drafted into the U.S. Army and stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C. for basic training. Luck seemed to play a role in his life. The first day of basic training, the company sergeant asked the recruits if anyone could type. He raised his hand and the sergeant said “you are company clerk” a position he held during basic training. As company clerk, he got to know the officers fairly well. At the end of the basic training, one of the officers was aware of his background and degree in animal husbandry and knew that the Ft. Bragg cold storage facility needed a food inspector for meat and dairy products. He said good-bye to the company as they left for Korea and became a food inspector, working with food producers for the army. A position he held throughout his 2 year tour of duty. During that period he was assigned to milk processing plants, stockyard slaughter plants and the food storage facilities at the base. These assignments gave him valuable experience in areas of animal use that later became part of his activities.

At the end of the army duty, the veterans were given the advantage of the GI bill for college expenses. His commanding officers in the army were veterinarians and urged him to apply for veterinary college. N. C. State College had entered into an agreement with the University of Georgia Veterinary College to accept five North Carolina students into their veterinary curriculum. His application was selected for admission by a distinguished committee of veterinarians and livestock leaders in the College of Agriculture. Individuals he had worked with in his undergraduate education.

At the University of Georgia one of his first courses was in the microscopic anatomy of the animal body. An interest that later resulted in the decision to pursue graduate studies in veterinary medical research. His interest in public service, writing and editing resulted in the election to the position of class secretary and the publication of his notes from the classroom lectures. An activity appreciated by his classmates who subscribed to the published notes. In his senior year he was appointed editor of THE SOUTHEASTERN VETERINARIAN, a quarterly publication of the UGA veterinary college. His initiation into the Alpha Psi Fraternity, a professional veterinary fraternity, was another adventure that resulted

in future contributions to veterinary education. He served as National Secretary and National President of the fraternity for over ten years. On the 50th anniversary of his graduation, the UGA College of Veterinary Medicine presented him the Distinguish Service Award for his contribution to veterinary medicine.

As a graduate student at the University of Minnesota he continued his quest to search for new concepts of animal structure and function. In the mid 1950^s the invention and perfection of the electron microscope opened new opportunities for research work. The medical school at the university was one of the leaders in the use of the electron microscope and allowed him the use of their facilities to study the ultrastructure of the bovine uterus which was the subject of his Master of Science Thesis.

During his graduate work in veterinary anatomy at Minnesota, he became acquainted with Dr. Malcolm E. Miller, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Veterinary Anatomy at Cornell University and author of the definitive textbook, the ANATOMY OF THE DOG. Dr. Miller invited him to visit Cornell and Dr. Stinson later became a member of their faculty after completing his graduate work.

At Cornell, Dr. Stinson's research work centered on the ultrastructure of the ruminant stomach using the electron microscope. He was assigned to teach microscopic anatomy and embryology to the veterinary students. The department of anatomy chairman assigned a young DVM graduate by the name of Dr. Adrian Morrison as his teaching assistant. Later, Dr. Morrison completed his Ph.D. at Cornell University and entered a career of research in neurology at the University of Pennsylvania. Because of his research work on primates, Dr. Morrison became the target of the wrath of the animal rights groups using terrorist tactics. The Animal Liberation Front had broken into his laboratory, trashed and ransacked his files. Dr. Morrison later became one of the founders and president of the National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA). This early friendship paved the way for Dr. Stinson becoming a strong supporter of the battle against the animal rights movements including PeTA and HSUS. His involvement in efforts to contest the animal rights movement lead to his acquainted with Patti Strand, National Director of the NAIA.

In 1964, Dr. Stinson accepted an assignment as an assistant professor in the Department of Anatomy at Michigan State University. He advanced to the rank of Full Professor and retired in 1994 as Professor Emeritus. During that 30 year period he has been active in dog activities in Michigan and has continued his contributions throughout his retirement years.

His interest in dogs began with obtaining a purebred Labrador Retriever puppy from MSU physiology department for the enjoyment of his four young children. As the puppy (Inky) grew older, obedience training became a necessity. He joined the Obedience Training Club of Greater Lansing and developed an interest in animal behavior and training. His first entry in an obedience trial resulted in earning his

first, and only, High-In-Trial ribbon at the Grand Traverse Kennel Club. There were, however, many future qualifying scores and titles, in both obedience and conformation, for the next 20 years. His experience and personal study on animal behavior prepared him to be assigned to teach a 3 credit course in animal behavior for the MSU veterinary students through his last 10 years of teaching.

Dr. Stinson's accomplishment to the Michigan dog industry included leadership roles in many dog activities, including vice president of the Obedience Training Club of Greater Lansing, president of the Ingham County Kennel Club, President of the Huron River Labrador Retriever Club, President of the Michigan Association for Pure Bred Dogs, Founder and Director of Legislative Affairs for the Michigan Hunting Dog Federation, Co-founder and Executive Director of the Michigan State University Pure Bred Dog Endowment Fund, an endowed fund with a current value of over 1.5 million dollars. The income from the fund is used to finance research on health problems of purebred dogs. He served on the Board of Directors of the American Dog Owners Association for a number of years and as Michigan's legislative liaison for the American Kennel Club.

While serving on the Companion Animal Advisory Committee of the Michigan Department of Agriculture his approach to regulating dog activities came to the attention of Frank Mainville, the outdoors editor of the Lansing State Journal and the Michigan United Conservation Clubs dog columnist and Arnold Welch, a coonhound and beagle hunting enthusiast. These two individuals prevailed upon him to become part of the Michigan Hunting Dog Federation and its Director of Legislative Affairs at the time of its establishment in 1990. A position he still holds.

In 2001 the United Kennel Club presented Dr. Stinson the first Fred T. Miller Memorial Award. The citation reads:

In Recognition Of His Work Lobbying For The Rights Of Dog Owners, Particularly In His Tireless Fight Against Breed Specific Dangerous Dog Laws, Dog Limitation Laws, And Anti-Breed Laws. Dr. Stinson Has Provided Data and Offered Convincing Arguments To Lawmakers All Over The United States, Encouraging Them To Enact Reasonable Laws That Protect The Public Without Infringing On The Rights Of Breeders. Dr. Stinson's Fact-Based Approach To Lobbying Has Provided A Role Model For Dog Breeders Across The United States.

His teaching responsibilities at MSU College of Veterinary Medicine included microscopic anatomy and embryology. As an authority on microscopic anatomy, he was the co-author of a book MICROSCOPIC ANATOMY OF THE DOG by Drs. William Adams, M. Lois Calhoun, Esther Smith and Al W. Stinson. In 1976 he was asked to write three chapters in the TEXTBOOK OF VETERINARY HISTOLOGY edited by Drs. Dellman and Brown. The textbook was used in many other veterinary colleges.

Dr. Stinson also served a four year term on the Editorial Board of the American Journal of Veterinary Research. The discipline of reading and evaluating scientific research reports played an important role in his ability to analyze legislation that regulates dog ownership and hunting with dogs and has resulted in a distinct service to the clarity of Michigan statutes in those areas.

The Michigan Association for Pure Bred Dogs and the Michigan Hunting Dog Federation and all dog owners and hobbyist are fortunate to have Dr. Stinson to express to Michigan's Legislators the needs of the most economically important animal industry in the state.

We sincerely encourage all dog breeders, owners, hunters and users of competitive performance activities to help Dr. Stinson protect our canine friends from adverse legislative restrictions.