



Eric Idwal Williams

“The sun never sets on the bovine practitioner”

Eric Idwal Williams, 78, died Wednesday, Aug. 15, 2001.

Eric Williams was born to John and Mary Williams Oct. 13, 1922, at Grove Farm, St. Clears, Wales. He attended the Royal Veterinary College, London, where he became a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons at 21 years old. He returned to Wales and joined a large animal practice in Carmarthen and later at St. Clears. He and Mary Harries were married Sept. 4, 1947, at Nantgaredig, Wales.

While he was engaged in a busy practice, he carried out clinical research on digestive problems in cattle. This led to the development of a diagnostic test for a condition known as Hardware Disease. The test became known as the Williams Test. He wrote a thesis on his clinical findings for which he was awarded the Fellowship, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in 1954. Williams also received the Harry Steele Bodger Traveling Scholarship to study in France in 1958. In 1960, he was awarded a Wellcome Foundation Research Scholarship to visit veterinary colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania, Cornell University and Oklahoma State University.

He presented lectures on his research work to the veterinary organizations in England, Scotland and Wales. He was active in the South Wales Division, British Veterinary Association and became president-elect in 1961. Williams was active in community life and served 10 years on the school board and 12 years on the parish council (city commission), with one year as chairman.

In October 1961, Williams, his wife and three children, Thomas, Michael and Betsi, emigrated to Stillwater, where Williams accepted an appointment as an instructor, Department of Medicine and Surgery, College of Veterinary Medicine at Oklahoma State University.

Williams was a professor and involved in research work. He received the Master of Science degree in Veterinary Pathology from Oklahoma State University in 1966. He presented lectures at several meetings locally, state, nationally and internationally and contributed chapters to books on cattle diseases.

In 1972, he became a Charter Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and served as examiner, 1976-78.

Williams was the recipient of the College Year Book dedication by the senior veterinary medicine classes of 1965 and 1972 and the Norden Distinguished Teacher (veterinary medicine) Award in 1969. He also received the OSU Alumni Association Outstanding Teacher at OSU in 1972.

During the summers of 1968 and 1969, Williams spent six weeks at San Carlos University, Guatemala with the Agency for International Development. He presented lectures and surgical demonstrations to students at the School of Veterinary Medicine. He also presented programs to groups of cattle owners in El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. In 1967, Williams became the editor of, *The Oklahoma Veterinarian*, a quarterly journal of the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association. He served for 25 years. In 1969, Williams assumed the editorship of *Bovine Practitioner* and in 1970, *The Proceedings of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners*. He retired from this position in 1998 after 29 years of service. These publications have a world-wide distribution.

Williams was elected the College of Veterinary Medicine representative on the OSU Faculty Council in 1969. He served as chairman of the Rules Committee. He was elected vice-chairman in 1970 and became chairman for 1971-72. He and his fellow officers

initiated the first cooperative effort with OU Faculty Senate to discuss matters of higher education. These meetings continued annually. He served on the OSU Athletic Council, 1987-91 and was chairman, Academic Standards Committee. He spent eight years on the board of directors, OSU Student Publications.

In 1976, Williams received an Americanism Award from the Cimarron Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The award is present "to a naturalized citizen of the United States who has shown the qualities of trustworthiness, service, leadership and patriotism." Williams became a U.S. citizen in 1967.

In 1977, Tulsa Veterinary Medical Association gave Williams a special award for Outstanding Services as editor of *The Oklahoma Veterinarian* and to the veterinary profession internationally.

In 1969, Williams attained the rank of professor. In 1974, he moved to the dean's office to serve as the college's first director of Student and Alumni Affairs, but still continued some clinical teaching assignments. He was responsible for planning the first College of Veterinary Medicine Convocation for the graduating class in 1976, which has been held annually ever since. The College Alumni Association was reestablished with a board of directors having an alumnus representative from each class. He was a member of the OSU Curriculum Committee and Student Scholarship Committee.

Williams served on several OSU selection committees: vice president for Student Services, chairman; vice president for University Relations and Development; dean, College of Agriculture; director, OSU Development Foundation; director, OSU Public Relations; department head, Animal Science; College of Veterinary Medicine, chairman of the Selection Committees for department head; Medicine and Surgery and dean of the college.

In 1980, Williams was the first recipient of the Veterinarian of the Year Award, Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association. The same year, he received a Medal of Honor from the French Buiatrics Society for distinguished service to veterinary medicine.

Williams was the host for 13 seven minute programs, titled "The Oklahoman Veterinarian," on modern veterinary medicine on Oklahoma Educational Television Authority, OETA, immediately following James Herriot's "All Creatures Great and Small." The same year, he became a foreign correspondent to the British Broadcast Corporation, Welsh Region.

The XII International Veterinary Congress Prize was presented to Dr. Williams for outstanding service towards the international understanding of veterinary medicine by the American Veterinary Medical Association in 1981.

Having served as editor for many years, he was the first recipient of the Amstutz-Williams Award established by the AABP. The award honors Dr. Harold Amstutz, AABP secretary-treasurer and later executive vice president for over 20 years and Williams as editor. The award is only presented periodically and is the AABP's highest honor.

In 1988, Williams retired from Oklahoma State University but continued as editor of *The Oklahoma Veterinarian* until 1992 and AABP publications until 1998. He was elected an Honorary Life Member, Board of Directors, World Buiatrics Association in 1992. He also received the Distinguished Service Award, Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association. In 1998,

OVMA President Joe Carter presented the President's Special Award to Williams. The award is presented to the person who has had a major influence on the president's life. Williams was cited as an outstanding teacher and leader.

Williams has been involved in community affairs for many years. He was an elder, First Presbyterian Church and a long time member of Stillwater Lions Club. He served on the board of directors, Stillwater Chamber of Commerce, 1974-77, serving as chairman, Rural-Urban Committee for one year. He was chairman of the City of Stillwater Water Conservation Committee appointed by the mayor in 1979.

William represented the OSU College of Veterinary Medicine at the Annual Convention, Arkansas VMA for 10 years to report on college activities. When he retired he was presented an Arkansas Traveler certificate signed by the governor which made him an Honorary Ambassador for Arkansas.

In 1982, Williams was appointed to the board of trustees, Stillwater Medical Center. He was chairman of the board, 1988-90. Williams was directly responsible for establishing the Stillwater Medical Center Foundation. This endowment has raised a large amount of funds for the SMC. He served on the original board for 10 years. He served a term on the Salvation Army Board of Directors. He had a special interest in history. He was the main author for the following history books: *The College of Veterinary Medicine*, part of OSU's centennial celebrations; *The Role of Faculty in University Governance at OSU* (contributing chapter); *First Presbyterian Church, Stillwater on its centennial anniversary in 1991*; *Stillwater Medical Center, "Tender Loving Care" in 1994 (1939-1994)*; *American Association of Bovine Practitioners (1964-1998) "The sun never sets on the bovine practitioner."*

Williams was appointed by Gov. Henry Bellmon to the Oklahoma Tourism Commission in 1990. In 1995, Williams was the recipient of the R.W. Hall Clinical Prize presented by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons at a ceremony in London. The prize was for outstanding contributions in the field of clinical observation and practice among farm animals.

In 1996, he published *Reflections of a Country Vet* about his life growing up on the farm, becoming a veterinarian and practicing in his hometown, St. Clears until the family left for the U.S. in 1961. The book was published by New Forums Press in Stillwater and by Gomer Press in Wales. In 1998, Williams was inducted to the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame for outstanding services to higher education and his profession. In 1999, Williams was inducted to the Stillwater Hall of Fame for outstanding service to the community.

Williams and his wife are members of the Stillwater Country Club and loved to play golf. He is an honorary member of the British Cattle Veterinary Association, and has lifetime memberships to American Veterinary Medical Association; Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association; OSU Alumni Association; OSU Emeriti Association; American Association of Bovine Practitioners; Phi Kappa Phi, Emeritus Life Member; and Stillwater Medical Center Auxiliary.

Williams is survived by his wife, Mary Williams of the home; sons, Thomas Williams and wife Emily, Stillwater; Michael Williams and wife Kathy, La Quinta, Calif.; daughter, Betsi Phillips, Tulsa; brother, Huw Williams, London, England; grandchildren, Sarah Phillips, Tulsa; Mark Phillips, Tulsa; Dylan Williams, La Quinta, Calif.; Ariana Williams, La Quinta, Calif.; and Bryn Williams, Stillwater.

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