

1886 to St. Paul, Minnesota, where he established his veterinary hospital at 175 East Eighth Street and continued his life-long practice of veterinary medicine. He was appointed Minnesota live-stock inspector in 1894 and served 8 years. He was active in various bodies of the Masonic fraternity, the Republican Party, and the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association.

He married Florence Anne Sherwood (1881-1964), daughter of James Sherwood (1827-) and Ann McCarthy in December 1909. Florence was born in Equinunk Pennsylvania and educated in Minnesota. They lived at 387 Maria Avenue in St. Paul where Benjamin Sherwood Pomeroy was born on April 24, 1911. Three more son's were born: James Adams (1914), George Victor (1918), and Harold Edsel (1920) Pomeroy. Ben's father died January 12, 1956 and his mother died March 11, 1964.

The Pomeroy Family Veterinary Base:

Ben's father and two of his brothers were all veterinarians. Ben earned his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Degree from Iowa State in 1933. Upon graduation he practiced part-time with his father in the "family clinic" downtown St. Paul at 185 East Seventh Street. Early on the practice was large animal, primarily equines, and subsequently became the Pomeroy Small Animal Hospital. His brothers Harold Pomeroy (COL '48) and James Pomeroy (KSU '49) also practiced there. Harold's son, Fred Pomeroy (MN '74), practices and continues to operate the Pomeroy Small Animal Hospital in the original building in St. Paul.

The Pomeroy Family Evolves

Benjamin S. Pomeroy continued his education earning a Masters Degree in 1934 from Cornell University. In 1938 On June 25 he married Lottie Margaret Lyon daughter of Roscoe Winslow Lyon (1883-1948) and Lottie Carson Lyon (1878-1970). "Margaret" as she was known was born January 31, 1911 in Hastings Minnesota where she was raised and graduated from Hastings High School. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Library Science at the University of Minnesota in 1934. She was subsequently employed as Hastings High School librarian and then at the University of Minnesota, School of Veterinary Medicine Library in St. Paul, up until she met and married Ben Pomeroy. Their first residences together were in St. Anthony Park on Como Avenue and Branston Street. Then in 1947 they moved into their home at 1443 Raymond Avenue within walking distance of the university campus in St. Paul and lived there the rest of their lives. Ben once accepted a job at the University of California in Davis, but never moved primarily because it would upset his family ties, interests and plans in the St. Anthony Park area of St. Paul.

They raised four children: Benjamin Adams (1941), Sherwood Robert (1943), Catherine Ann (1945) and Margaret Dawn (1947). They are all graduates of the University of Minnesota, Benjamin in agriculture business and banking application development, Sherwood an orthodontist, Catherine in elementary education and Dawn a dental assistant. Benjamin, Sherwood and Dawn married and have provided Ben and Margaret with 9 grand-children and 15 great-grand-children.

Grandson Scott, son of Dawn and Darrell Hewitt, bought the Pomeroy family home on Raymond Avenue and with wife Elizabeth their family includes children, Laila and Owen Benjamin.

Mixing Veterinary Business and Family:

From 1934 -1948 Dr. Ben Pomeroy was a general practitioner and part time associate with his father Dr. B. A. Pomeroy. The Pomeroy children were well exposed to veterinary medicine with a father who spent weekends practicing in his father's clinic and often took his children along. Later on while Ben was employed as a "university veterinarian" he was not allowed to be connected to a clinic or private hospital. However, he conducted a private practice from his home and made house calls with his black bag. His children fondly remember taking the results of surgical procedures, like puppy dog tails, as well as young poults, chicks, bunnies or other baby animals to school to show off to their classmates. At home, family dogs and cats were always present and occasionally a couple lambs or other orphans would be taken on by Margaret and the children. Boxes of newly hatched chicks or poults were commonly dropped off on the front porch or the children (primarily Dawn) would pick up deliveries at the airport. The children also spent time helping in their grandfather's veterinary clinic. Clients often brought their animals to the house. Poultry farmers often would call and meet Dr. Pomeroy at the university autopsy laboratory on weekends. He didn't refuse anyone who needed his help and would share baby sitting chores with his wife by taking his children with him. Practice trips to nearby poultry farms were also a weekend outing for the family, who often were treated to a 10 cent burger stop at "White Castle" on the way home. Ben was very supportive of university activities and always had season tickets for the University of Minnesota football and hockey games for his family.

Margaret was very involved in her husband's profession. She served as president of the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association Auxiliary, being elected to two terms: 1945-46 and 1969-70 She was an officer in the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Auxiliary in the 1960's and chairwomen of the committee that organized the annual meeting of the American Veterinary Medicine Association in Minneapolis in 1969. Margaret and also the children attended many veterinary meetings and conventions with Ben. While he was Secretary-Treasurer of MVMA, Margaret and the children alphabetized membership records and registered attendees at educational meetings.

Margaret suffered a debilitating stroke in 1988 and passed away in 1991. Ben said of his wife, "Her books were her first love, after the family." She was chairwomen of the Twin City Book Roundtable in the 1960's and 1970's and was a member of the Friend's of the St. Paul Public Library. During Ben's teaching years Margaret and the family hosted foreign graduate students at their home for their family holiday dinners. After Margaret died Ben's daughters, most often Catherine, would fly with him to veterinary and poultry meetings.

Community Activities:

Ben and Margaret were active in their church where Ben taught Sunday school and served as an Elder in the House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul. They were active and supportive in their local PTA's at St. Anthony Park Elementary School and Murray High School where their children went to school. Margaret served as president of both PTA's and for many years Ben organized a chicken barbeque for the local St. Anthony Park Elementary School annual fund drive serving as many as 800 chickens with the help of his family. Ben would make presentations to children in school about mutual love for animals and serve as a judge for their Murray Junior High School science project awards. He would volunteer for Christmas pageants at school with the children and dress up as Santa Claus for neighbors. Margaret was active in the Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, and Ben served many years as Assistant Scoutmaster and counselor for animal, public health and citizenship merit badges.

Political Activities Early On:

Ben Pomeroy was a block worker in 1956–59, precinct officer 1959-60, chairman South 43rd Legislative District Republican Party 1960-61, chairman Fourth District Republican Committee 1961-63 and 1967-69, member Minnesota Republican State Executive Committee 1961-65 and 1967-69, chairman Ramsey County Republican Committee 1961-65, and Minnesota Delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1964 when Goldwater was on the ticket. His children remember helping stuff envelopes.

University of Minnesota Career and Administrative Changes

Following completion of his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in 1933 and Master of Science Degree in 1934, Dr. Pomeroy was appointed Diagnostician in the Division of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Minnesota in 1934. He served in that position until 1937 when he was given the rank of Instructor. In 1943 he was promoted to the position of Assistant Professor. Dr. Pomeroy continued his education receiving his Ph.D. in 1944. In 1945 he was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor and to full Professor in 1948, when the new School of Veterinary Medicine was opening. In 1953 he was appointed Head of the Department of Veterinary Microbiology and Public Health in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Ben was a member of the Veterinary Microbiology Graduate Faculty from 1945 until his retirement in 1981. He was advisor for 36 M.S. and PhD graduates. He also had an influence on many other veterinarians who went into poultry medicine and sought assistance from Ben with poultry disease issues. Your author was such a veterinarian. I was never turned down by Ben, and never stopped learning from him. He always seemed to have a graduate student working on whatever your problem was and would help with an investigation. Ben loved organized veterinary medicine and was always organizing meetings and soliciting input from the field. Dr. Frank Siccardi from Arkansas, one of his successful graduate students, characterized Ben's attributes as: "humility, sense of duty and compassion." His teaching and research provided for significant advancement of knowledge in avian medicine.

In 1973 Dr. Pomeroy lost his position as Chair of the Department of Veterinary Microbiology in the College of Veterinary Medicine when the College was reorganized

by a group of professors who eliminated the existing departments and consolidated them into two departments – Clinical Sciences and Biological Sciences. Subsequently he lost his divisional office, secretarial staff and travel budget. The poultry industry recognized the effect of this as a loss of avian veterinary expertise and research programs and organized a plan to establish an Avian Disease Research Center in the College with Dr. Pomeroy as the Director. Two state legislators were engaged who introduced legislation in 1975 to establish the Center, but the College indicated a space problem and did not want it. The legislation failed. However, through industry lobby efforts, funding was secured to establish six new Avian Medicine positions with funding through the College of Agriculture and Dr. Pomeroy's leadership and research efforts continued at the University. He has been credited with playing an important role in developing an understanding of more than 23 infectious disease agents. Dr. Pomeroy has also been credited with research leadership in Minnesota resulting in the reduction of disease mortality from 25 percent in the 1930's to 8 percent in 1988.

After 5 decades of service to the poultry industry Ben retired from the University and with the leadership of his friend, Lloyd Peterson of Paynesville, Minnesota, the industry organized a funding campaign to establish the Pomeroy Chair in Avian Health. Lloyd was a former Regent of the University and one of Minnesota's largest and most successful turkey farmers. It took more than 2 years and some 200 individual donors in addition to partial matching funds from the University Foundation to establish the two million dollar chair in 1985. The only endowed poultry chair in the U.S., it is associated with the College of Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Sciences and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. Jagdev Sharma holds the Benjamin S. Pomeroy Endowed Chair in Avian Health and is Editor of *Avian Diseases*, which is the peer reviewed research journal of the American Association of Avian Pathologists. He wrote that Ben's role in the success of the turkey industry ultimately had a positive impact on the agricultural economy of Minnesota. The state is number one in the nation in turkey production and the industry leaders credit a large portion of their success to Ben's help in flock health management. The endowed chair created by the industry provides for continued future support at the University of Minnesota for the poultry industry and the state's agricultural economy.

Dr. Pomeroy served as Acting Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine in 1979-1980 following Dean Sidney Ewing's tenure and the appointment of Dean Robert Dunlop.

Charter Member of the American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP)

Dr. Stanley Kleven, a graduate student of Ben Pomeroy and Regent Professor Emeritus, University of Georgia wrote of Dr. Pomeroy's involvement with AAAP. "The AAAP is an international organization of over 600 members for poultry veterinarians and other poultry professional interested in poultry medicine. It is an affiliate of the American Veterinarian Association sponsoring excellent scientific meetings, publishes the journal *Avian Diseases*, the textbook *Diseases of Poultry*, and various other manuals, publications and teaching materials. It is a powerful force in promoting poultry medicine and the poultry industry. Dr. Pomeroy was one of 12 veterinarians at the 1957 annual

meeting of AVMA, who organized the AAAP as a national organization and established its founding in 1958. The respect other charter members held for Dr. Ben Pomeroy was shown by his election to serve as the first President of AAAP. Ben was active all of professional life in this highly recognized international organization.”

The Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA)

The MVMA holds a central position in the life story of Dr. Pomeroy. Ben’s love of the profession of veterinary medicine, his sense of duty and political interest are all exemplified by his exceptional volunteerism as a member of the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association where his activities span over four decades from before 1935 until his death in 2004. He served on various committees including: Program, Infectious Disease, Legislative and Governmental Affairs. He served 25 years as Secretary Treasurer from 1950 to 1975, was President in 1978 – 1979, and received the Distinguished Service Award in 1980.

However, his major political life started in 1981 when he retired from a 48 year career at the University of Minnesota. He could then pursue his political passion and lobby in the state legislature for the next 23 years of his life on behalf of veterinary medicine, agriculture, animal health and the University. He organized the MVMA Government Affairs Committee, which he then chaired until his passing in 2004. His Government Affairs Committee was the largest and most active committee in MVMA with excellent attendance at meetings. He did his best to stress the importance of his committee to the profession and was always asking for more resources for his committee than the Board of Directors were able to fund.

When Ben retired from the University, MVMA provided him with office space which he utilized most every day between trips to the capitol and legislative offices. He didn’t use a type-writer or computer and other than assistance provided by MVMA staff, much of his communication with the membership was in long hand and by telephone.

He also organized the MVMA political organization, VET-PAC so moneys could be collected and given to specific legislators each year to attract their “ear” at critical times during the next legislative session. Contributors to VET-PAC were issued a special badge or ribbon for MVMA meetings and the slackers knew they would be buttonholed by Ben to contribute.

To get grass roots input he organized the Key Contact Network, identifying and assigning an MVMA member to each legislator who would be responsible to make personal contacts at critical times during the session. He even had the Key Contacts present the MVMA VET-PAC check to their legislator. Ben’s program worked wonders on veterinary issues before the legislature.

Ben was easily identified a Republican, but had no problem addressing meetings and earning bipartisan consensus with jovial remarks that made the meetings a comfortable learning experience for all.

His committee met annually prior to each legislative session to develop an official MVMA position on each of the expected current issues. He was able then to officially and accurately represent his colleagues in the lobbying activities of the upcoming legislative session. Ben not only knew most every legislator personally, but also knew the families of many of them. To the legislators he was their expert whenever a veterinary question arose. His whole program was credible and his approach was very effective. He did his homework and lobbied with passion, as asserted by many of his colleagues. Ben lobbied for the University, for veterinary medicine, for animal agriculture in general and was very effective in obtaining research funding. Ben developed the knowledge and expertise necessary to obtain funding for research projects and knew when, where and to who contacts were needed to lobby for funding be it government, industry or other sources

Ben loved politics and with his sense of duty, it showed. Your author visited him in his home in January 2004 when he was anticipating the surgery that would repair his leaking heart valve. I listened to his story describing the procedure and his health status. In a matter-of-fact way, he told me that the medications his doctors gave him for his condition made it impossible for him to get anything done. He knew the surgical risk, but looked forward to the procedure that would restore his ability to get back to work and on with his life. A new 2004 legislative session was about to begin and he was anxious to be ready.

The Minnesota Turkey Growers Association (MTGA) Experience

Ben promoted science based disease control programs that could be made to work in Minnesota and then got them incorporated into the National Poultry Improvement Plan. He organized the Minnesota Breeder Hen Committee of MTGA and held meetings to disseminate the knowledge they needed to install voluntary disease control programs state and nation wide. He did this through research and with credible workable procedures. Through testing and label requirements many of the egg transmitted diseases such as salmonella and mycoplasma agents were eliminated from commercial poult and chick sales. He developed and promoted disease reporting systems to identify priorities for research that extended to the National Turkey Federation. He included the Minnesota Livestock Sanitary Board, later named the Minnesota Board of Animal Health, in the control programs, which resulted in development of official programs and cooperation in control work. He established a trust between the industry and the regulator in Minnesota that became the envy of other state poultry health and regulatory agencies. He identified the fallacy of industry hiding disease problems from regulators and neighbors and promoted open cooperation in disease control. He did this by obtaining funds from the industry and government so he could get the required research done to understand the disease and use science to develop the control and eradication plan.

The MTGA Board of Directors set up an annual travel fund for Ben after his retirement from the University so that he could continue to attend veterinary and turkey meetings.

Lobbyist Years.

Ben was involved early on with legislative activity at the University of Minnesota when the new School of Veterinary Medicine was established in 1947 and with construction

funding for the animal hospital building in 1950 and the Veterinary Science building in 1952. However his lobbyist career really developed following his retirement from the University in 1981 at the age of 70. It was not until 1983 that the Lewis Hospital for Companion Animals was built. Then a significant effort by all facets of animal agriculture and veterinary medicine resulted in the funding of the new Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory by the state legislature, which opened in 1992. Each year Ben was very active in support of the annual budget and bonding process for the University and the College of Veterinary Medicine. In addition to the University and the College, he lobbied for the poultry industry, disease research funding, disease control programs, the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association, the veterinary practice act, for animal agriculture and all animals.

Minnesota State Senator Steve Dille, a veterinarian (MN'69) and former student of Dr. Pomeroy was on the receiving end of Ben's lobby activity. He wrote that "Dr. Ben Pomeroy was a special kind of Republican with the skills needed to work well with Democrats, Independents and all who come together in the political arena. Experienced legislators learned to listen carefully to Citizen Dr. Ben Pomeroy. He was the voice of veterinary medicine at the state capitol." The VET-PAC organization and the Veterinary Key Contact Network both established under Ben's leadership were instrumental in his success as a lobbyist. Senator Dille wrote: "Most all of the past 60 years of accomplishments in the legislative area for the veterinary profession were due to the work of an authentic Minnesota veterinary government affairs hero, Dr. Ben Pomeroy."

Dr. Tom Hagerty, Past Minnesota State Veterinarian worked after his retirement as a volunteer with Ben Pomeroy dealing with the Minnesota Legislature and has taken up the work now since Dr. Pomeroy passed away. He wrote that "Ben had amazing ability to get the attention of legislators and remembered every detail of their meeting. He was the *ultimate bulldog* holding them to their word. He commanded respect and was regarded as the *face of veterinary medicine* at the Capitol." He did not let himself be dragged into the *computer age* and used the phone and the US mail to enlist veterinarians in buttonholing and supporting legislators and raising money for VET-PAC. It was not easy to say no to Ben. His strengths were his fine mind, excellent memory, writing ability and good judgment."

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA)

Dr. Pomeroy was an active member of USAHA for 60 years and served on several committees, chairing the Committee on Salmonellosis for more than 10 years. He shared and promoted his research findings and disease control programs with the rest of the country, gaining respect both nationally and internationally. Dr. Dick McCapes, Past President of USAHA and a poultry colleague wrote of Ben's participation in USAHA meetings. "Dr. Pomeroy was a superb, prolific writer and easily communicated his research findings and recommendations to the scientific community as well as the public and poultry industries in an amazing spectrum of publications. He was a great speaker and presenter, one you did not want to miss because of his insights and clarity of thought... and because of his not infrequent and passionate exhortation and prodding of his audience (and the nation) to *stay the course* and do what was necessary to complete

difficult eradication and control programs. He was a sight to behold on these occasions. His audience, whether a committee or large general session, would be abruptly reduced to an uncomfortable silence when this respected, silver haired scientist suddenly thundered difficult, but always reasonable, challenges at them and then, in utter silence for what seemed an eternity, stared them down. It was classic, always a subject of conversation, always effective in getting an important point across... it was Ben.”

The Minnesota Foundation for Responsible Animal Care. (MnFRAC)

This organization derived from the Minnesota Forum for Agriculture continues to flourish as a strong voice for animal agriculture in Minnesota. “Dr. Pomeroy was one of a small group of visionaries whose leadership saw the need for cooperation among producers and farm organizations to work together to have greater impact on public opinion and legislative action than each group working alone. The Forum produced and published information important to the education of children and youth about agriculture. This led to the charitable foundation we have now dedicated to public education about agriculture and animal welfare and includes consumer confidence in quality and safety as well as responsible animal care in production, processing and research. His political sense taught us to be a watchdog.” The information provided here by Juanita and Dick Boniface, MnFRAC staff shows their great appreciation for the vision, loyal participation and contributions of Dr. Pomeroy as an organizer and member of the Board of Directors of MnFRAC.

Honors and Awards:

Ben’s curriculum vitae lists 7 Honor Societies, 6 Honorary Life Memberships and 52 award plaques and certificates covering 71 years of his veterinary and political career. He has been honored by: among others, the University of Minnesota, Iowa State University, American Association of Avian Pathologists, American Veterinary Medical Association, Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association, the US Department of Agriculture, National Turkey Federation, Minnesota Turkey Growers Association, Texas Poultry Association, local community organizations, and the Minnesota State Legislature.

Final Tribute by the Minnesota State Legislature and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

A year after Dr. Pomeroy passed away the legislature provided funding for the renovation of the historic Dairy Barn on the campus of the College of Veterinary Medicine in his memory. The College had been seeking funds for over a decade. Renovation proceeded in 2006 and the University of Minnesota Regents named the building the “Pomeroy Student/Alumni Learning Center.” The project was completed in early 2007 and includes a large conference room on the first floor named the “Pomeroy Gallery.” In this room, display cases provided and utilized by the Minnesota Veterinary Historical Museum (MVHM) will honor and perpetuate the legacy of Dr. Ben Pomeroy.

Biography solicited by the Committee on the History of Avian Medicine, American Association of Avian Pathologists.

Additional biographical materials may be available from the AAP Historical Archives located at Iowa State University. Contact information is as follows:

Special Collections Dept. & University Archives

403 Parks Library

Iowa State University

Ames, IA 50011-2140

Phone: (515) 294-6648

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WWW: <http://www.lib.iastate.edu/spcl/index.html>