

endnote

This issue of *Cornell Veterinary Medicine* contains the last of three articles published in the past 18 months featuring distinguished professors emeriti who graduated from Cornell University during the middle 1940s. *They also are your husbands.*

Professors Fox and Kirk are clinicians; Professor Evans is an anatomist. Each was a highly respected leader in his time and leaves an unforgettable legacy for his beloved profession. They also served as department chairs for their respective disciplines during an important period of expansion and development in the history of the college.

Your husbands earned the privilege of being esteemed members of what TV anchor and author Tom Brokaw describes as the “greatest generation” of Americans. These were the leaders and ordinary people alike who grew up during the Great Depression and the Second World War and then went on to build modern America.

One experience these three men have shared is the central role that you, their spouses, have played in the success of their respective careers, and also in the life of the college as a whole. Friends and colleagues in the veterinary profession locally and nationally have always known you as couples: Francis and Cully, Bob and Helen, Howie and Erica. However, in talking with your husbands recently, each expressed profound regret that insufficient credit has gone to the roles that you had in their

An open letter to Erica Evans, Cully Fox, and Helen Kirk

respective career accomplishments at Cornell University and in the advancement of the profession in New York State and beyond.

In reality, the visible role that you each played in college life is remembered with special fondness. You were truly engaged in the activities of the college. The enduring impact that you had on others is evident during reunions and other college gatherings, when you are greeted with genial solicitude and gratitude from former students, and then engage these veterinarians from all walks of life in conversation about the current challenges of the profession.

You also had an impact that was seldom evident in the public eye of the university. What the admiring public did not see was the resolute support and the understated wisdom that directed and sustained many critical aspects of your husbands’ professional careers. Each of the three acknowledged that they could not have realized their exceptional achievements as scholars, clinicians, educators, and authors without your intellectual guiding force and your inspiration. While your influence is

largely invisible in the professional arena, your husbands value each of you as partners in their work as well as in life.

As in the rest of society, the role of spouses and partners in the life of the college and the veterinary profession has changed greatly in the past two generations. The purpose of this brief tribute is not to compare the relative merits of gender roles or family structure prevalent in the middle decades of the last century with those today. Indeed, then as now, there are numerous examples of enduring partnerships that are powerful, not only in the personal sphere, but also in the broader community.

The goal of this public letter is simply to extend appreciation to you, representing a broad cohort of spouses and partners of both genders, whose contributions in your time and place left an imprint on the life and success of this great college.

To each of you—Erica, Cully, and Helen—symbolic of all engaged partners of veterinarians from the “greatest generation,” this endnote is dedicated with love, admiration, and respect, and above all, with sincere thanks.

Fondly,



Austin O. Hooey *Dean of Veterinary Medicine*