

Dr. Steve C. Haskins

It is with heavy hearts we write this tribute for our colleague and friend Steve C. Haskins who died tragically on April 26th in a small plane crash. Steve was a pioneer in the fields of both anesthesia and emergency and critical care. His contributions to our profession were numerous as a leader, a teacher and an innovator.

After obtaining his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Washington State University 1969, Steve completed an internship at the Animal Medical Center in New York in 1970. He obtained a Master of Science Degree and completed an anesthesia residency at the University of Minnesota in 1973. Steve was an instructor and assistant professor while at Minnesota. He subsequently became one of the first Diplomates in the American College of Veterinary Anesthesia. In 1975 Steve joined the faculty at the University of California Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine. Initially, he divided his clinical time between anesthesia and critical care; eventually devoting his clinical time entirely to emergency and critical care. As a result, Steve established one of the first true veterinary intensive care units in the world and served as its director. He retired in June of 2006 as a Professor Emeritus of Emergency/Critical Patient Care and Anesthesia.

Steve was instrumental in establishing and obtaining recognition for the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care (ACVECC) from the American Board of Veterinary Specialties of the American Veterinary Medical Association. He was one of the nineteen charter diplomates and from 1989 – 1991, he served as ACVECC's first president. He later also served on ACVECC's Board of Regents, on its residency training and examination committees.

Steve was a long time member of the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society (VECCS). He was the president for the American Society of Veterinary Anesthesiology when it merged with the Veterinary Critical Care Society, the predecessor of VECCS. He filled the position of VECCS president from 1980 – 1982 and served on the VECCS Program as well as the Anesthesia and Intensive Care committees. He was the leader in developing VECCS educational programs as we know them today and was the primary organizer of VECCS wet labs from 1976 – 1990. He was a very popular lecturer and was recognized in September 2013 with a special VECCS Presidents Award for being the only person to have spoken at all nineteen IVECCS.

Perhaps Steve's greatest gift was his teaching ability. This was best summarized by Daniel

Fletcher, one of his former students and colleagues, who said “despite the fact that he was on a different plane of knowledge and understanding from the rest of us, he was passionate about sharing his expertise with everyone around him through his teaching. He was one of the most approachable and invested teachers I have ever met. He inspired me to be better, to be true to the facts, to share what little I know, and to try to inspire others.” Steve was recognized for his teaching abilities and awarded the Norton Distinguished Teaching award in 1973 and 1985 from the Universities of Minnesota and California, respectively. In 2007 he was recognized for Excellence in Teaching and Research from his alma mater Washington State University. Steve mentored many people throughout his career; veterinary students, residents, and veterinary technicians alike. He encouraged people when they need encouraging, he advised when they need advice, and he lent an ear when they need a sounding board.

Steve was recognized for bringing scientific rigor to the specialty of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care. He published over seventy scientific articles and contributed to many texts and proceedings. Steve was on the cutting edge of emergency and critical care before it was widely recognized. His early investigations have provided the basis for much of what we do in veterinary critical care today. He was one of the first to explore the clinical application of acid-base, he had an outstanding understanding of cardiopulmonary physiology and he was a pioneer of mechanical ventilation in veterinary patients.

Aside from his professional performance, Steve was a wonderful person. He was charming and funny. He loved a good social occasion and was always happy to spend time with friends, new or old. In all aspects of his life it was evident that he truly loved animals. He inspired and influenced many people around the world and his legacy will live on in those lives he touched.

Kate Hopper
Harold Davis
Gary Stamp

News article on Dr Steve Haskins: <http://www.davisenterprise.com/local-news/ucd/veterinary-pioneer-haskins-dies-in-plane-crash/>