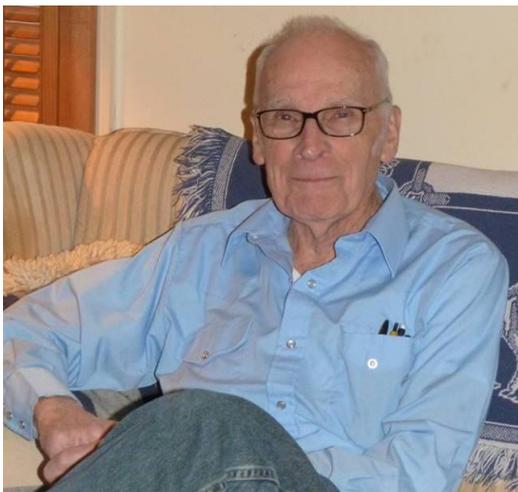


# YANKTON DAILY PRESS & DAKOTAN

## **Yankton native, Dr. Eugene T. Lyons, parasitologist honored at University of Kentucky**

**January 12, 2018 ARTS SECTION**

**Y**ankton native, Dr. Eugene T. Lyons, a world-renowned equine parasitologist will be honored January 19<sup>th</sup> at a Memorial Reception at the University of Kentucky where he was engaged in veterinary parasitology research for 56 years. Dr. Lyons maintained an active research agenda until his death, December 7, 2017 at age 86.



“Dr. Lyons was a legend, a giant in veterinary parasitology. His list of contributions to veterinary science is remarkable. People traveled from across the world to meet him and to learn from him”, said Martin Nielsen, associate professor at the Gluck Equine Research Center.

The Lyons family will be represented at the celebration in Lexington by Will and Jane Lyons, Sioux Falls and Kathy Lyons Tabak and Dr. David Tabak, Barrington, Illinois. Two of Dr. Lyons’ brothers, Pat with Pearl, and Jack reside in Yankton. Three other brothers are: Frank with Jean, Rock Island, Illinois; Tom with Marcia, San Antonio, Texas and Bob with Nona, Kennebunkport, Maine. His sister, Elizabeth Susan Winckler predeceased him in 1992.

Gene Lyons was born in 1931, the third son of William and Mary Lyons. He completed eight grades at the one-room Willowdale School on his parent’s farm east of Yankton and graduated from Yankton High School in 1949.

After one year at Yankton College, he served three years in the U.S. Coast Guard. Then, as Gene described the next chapter in his life in an interview, "thanks to that wonderful G.I. bill, I found myself a student in the Department of Zoology at Brookings where I worked in the Parasitology Lab. I unfrozen fish, cut them up and extracted parasites for examination. My interest in the field of parasitology awakened." He completed his B.S. degree at SDSU in 1956.

While pursuing his M.S. degree (1958) at Kansas State University, Lyons was a protégé of nationally known parasitologist, Dr. Merle Hansen who had an excellent cadre of graduate students, many of whom went on to distinguish themselves in parasitology careers. Dr. James A. Guikema, Associate Director of K-State's Division of Biology wrote: "To devote 56 years of a life to science is a reality to be embraced. The United States has an excellent program in combating parasites – stemming in part from Professor Lyons' work. With his example, we at K-State seek to understand and stop the effects that pathogens, bacteria and virus have in limiting our lives. This is something that Gene helped establish in his time as a valued graduate student at K-State."

After obtaining his doctorate in parasitology at Colorado State University in 1963, Dr. Lyons continued his 56 year career at the Gluck Equine Research Center University of Kentucky where he was engaged in his research rounds on the horse farm to the morning he died.

Lyons published more than 300 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. He mentored dozens of graduate and undergraduate students and hosted and mentored more than 25 visiting scientists and students in his laboratory throughout his career.

The Gluck Center received numerous condolence emails from people working in the parasitology community near and far. One was from Dr. William Campbell, Irish born parasitologist, who was awarded the 2015 Nobel Prize in medicine for his work on a drug that fights roundworm-related infections. Dr. Campbell who has worked with both human and veterinary medicine - because parasites are so integral to both - knew Gene Lyons very well and acknowledged the use of his research work in parasitological diseases.

The theme running through the many condolences was best expressed by Dr. Tetiana Kuzmina, senior researcher at the National Academy of Sciences, Kiev, Ukraine. She wrote of her mentor: "Dr. Lyons was my colleague, my teacher, my friend, my American Professor. We met personally eight years ago when he invited me to his laboratory for a short research visit to study horse parasites. Over the years, we worked together

with horses, fur seals, sea lions in different parts of the USA. Dr. Lyons and his colleague Sharon Tolliver were the brightest lights in the American classical parasitology – talented, creative, hard-working and extremely gifted researchers – who taught me and many other beginners how to be a Real Parasitologist. He was the real Giant in the classical parasitology in the USA and for all the world.”

His legacy will endure through the two historic horse parasitology research herds now named the **Gene Lyons Historic Parasitology Herds**. The herds, which he with his research colleague, Dr. Harold Drudge established in the 1970s, are unique in the world today and remain an invaluable resource for parasitology research. One herd is harboring multi-drug resistant parasites and the other has been kept without deworming since 1979.

Lyons and Drudge were co-recipients of the American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists Distinguished Veterinary Parasitologist Award in 1991. Dr. Lyons was inducted into the Equine Research Hall of Fame in 2012.

Dr. Lyons serviced the needs of local horse farms and veterinarians. He also made numerous research trips to study parasitology issues in fur seals and sea lions in Alaska, California and Australia.

David Horohov, Gluck Center director and department chair at University of Kentucky said: "Dr. Lyons made multiple contributions to the field of parasitology through a lifetime of devotion to his work and a commitment to excellence to this field. His legacy will include the contributions he has made and the people he has trained."

Gene Lyons will be remembered by his family and colleagues as a gentle dedicated scientist, ever ready to extend a helping hand.