

Dedication



Mark Loren Morris, Jr

February 3, 1934–January 14, 2007

Dr. Mark L. Morris, Jr. earned his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Cornell University in 1958 and his Doctor of Philosophy degree in nutrition from the University of Wisconsin in 1963. After completing his formal education, he embarked on a career in applied animal nutrition, following the footsteps of his father, Dr. Mark L. Morris, Sr. His mission in life was to focus on the care of animals by nutrition.

Dr. Morris provided insight into the nutritional needs of healthy and ill companion animals (primarily cats and dogs) and so-called exotic and zoo animals. He was admired by colleagues as an innovator, developing the Science Diet brand of premium food and expanding the line of Prescription diets available to complement various recipes of pharmacologic therapy used to treat a variety of diseases. The following tributes are from colleagues and friends.

TRIBUTES

As the president and CEO of Morris Animal Foundation, I had the privilege of working with Mark for more than 3 years. Mark had so many good qualities; he was an animal lover, a scientist, a veterinarian, and a financial wizard who used all of his skills to grow the Foundation started by his parents. Mark was compassionate and caring toward everyone—human and animal. No matter who he was speaking to, he gave that person his complete attention and made sure they knew that what they had to say was important. He loved to be with people.

Mark also tried to make the employees who worked at the foundation feel like they were part of the Morris family. He and his wife, Bette, always welcomed me into their home with open arms whenever I visited Topeka, Kansas. One of my fondest memories was early in my days at the Morris Foundation. We were planning for the foundation's future, and I was feeling stressed. I called Mark. I expressed to him how important it was to me that I preserve his family's legacy and move the foundation in the right direction. He responded, "This isn't my family's foundation. It is your foundation and the staff's foundation. It belongs to all of you."

Over the years, I learned a great deal from Mark, although he never was able to explain hedge-fund investing in a way I could understand! He was a true friend of

mine and a true friend of animals and those that love them. Through his lifetime of work, he touched the lives of millions of animals and humans throughout the world.

*Patricia N. Olson, DVM, PhD
President and CEO, Morris Animal Foundation*

Mark L. Morris, Jr. was a cherished friend and a wonderful person. He was one of the most caring, intelligent, passionate, enthusiastic, talented, hard working people that I have known. If he were reading these words, he would be appreciative, but also slightly embarrassed. So to save him from that, I will interrupt the accolades with a couple of lighter experiences that will, of course, be at his expense. Here are a few examples of his busy, high-energy approach to daily life. On most topics, Mark was a quick learner, but there were a few exceptions.

Mark was always in a hurry, both at work and the occasional play. As a result of numerous speeding tickets, he was a frequent participant in Kansas' driver safety courses. He probably could have taught the course himself, from memory. While participating in one of the series, he noted to us that his "classmates" were 3 or 4 decades younger than he was and that he was beginning to feel more than a little conspicuous during class. I think he only took one more course after that.

Mark flew a pressurized, turbocharged Beech Baron that had weather radar and wing/prop deicing cuffs. This well-equipped plane, along with his instrument rating, allowed him to fly in questionable weather. This combination caused me, a former fair weather and non-instrument rated pilot, to be in occasional dialogue with the Creator. On one particularly memorable winter night we were returning from California and attempting a landing in Denver, Colorado during a blizzard. We were on the final leg of the approach to the runway, but we couldn't see anything except for snow swirling around the landing lights. Mark was checking his instruments and, at the same time, straining to see the approach lights. I was looking down, through the side window and finally could see the tops of snow-covered trees. In an urgent tone, I advised him that it might be wise to pull up. We climbed slightly and droned on. Thankfully (my perspective), we eventually saw the approach lights ahead and to the right. From there, we landed uneventfully. Mark seemed not to be concerned, and nothing further was said. I reached down and patted the tarmac.

Mark did a great job with presentations we called "wet labs." Attendees were instructed on what to look for when physically evaluating pet foods for quality. It should be no surprise that Mark had a very fast paced, energetic lecturing style. Near the end of the demonstration, he would typically take a bite from a slice of canned Prescription Diet Canine s/d and would quickly chew and swallow it to impress the audience with the quality of the ingredients in the product. For a canned food, s/d was relatively dry. However, he usually took a reasonable sized bite and was able to chew and swallow it in seconds. During one demonstration, in his enthusiasm, he took too large a bite and the chewing went on and on. The attendees, initially amused, soon broke into open laughter. The chewing continued and Mark's face reddened. Finally, he was able to swallow both the food and his pride, and laughed along with us. Then back to his lecture as if nothing had happened.

Now back to the accolades: veterinary medicine, pets, their owners, and the many of us who worked with him owe much to his life's work and the world is not the same without him.

*Michael S. Hand, DVM, PhD
Vice-President Emeritus, Hill's Science and Technology Center*

Mark Morris was a man of extreme passion. He clearly exhibited this passion throughout his long and distinguished career as it related to the business of therapeutic and wellness diets he and his father developed. While his primary focus was in the area of scientific discovery, he was equally engaged and enthusiastic about all aspects of what was required to deliver a finished product to dogs and cats. Mark's passion spilled over into marketing, sales, manufacturing, quality control, and finance.

Mark was always interested in learning all about people and their individual situations. This usually resulted in long-term personal relationships across virtually all levels of socioeconomic backgrounds. This curiosity not only helped build relationships, but also was a huge benefit in his business activities as well.

Mark gave back to the community in a number of ways. He and I formed the Topeka Zoological Foundation and established the "Lions Pride Exhibit", to cite just one example. His philanthropy by way of the Morris Animal Foundation is well established.

*Robert C. Wheeler
CEO, Hill's Pet Nutrition*

I first met Dr. Morris in 1975 when he came to Minnesota to ask for independent studies on the safety and efficacy of a diet that he was formulating. That was the beginning of a life-long relationship. I came to know Mark Jr. as an enthusiastic, cheerful, and generous colleague and friend. His warm smile that he wore inside and out was contagious. He was a charismatic person of enormous energy who went the extra mile in his efforts to serve veterinarians by way of application of nutritional principles to clinical veterinary medicine. His training in research combined with common sense and skills in business provided him with unique insights into the needs of colleagues in private practice. In his role as the owner of the research company known as Mark Morris Associates, he surrounded himself with individuals who had expertise in special facets of basic and applied nutrition. Their combined expertise rivaled many clinical nutrition programs in colleges of veterinary medicine. Mark also provided formal nutrition courses at colleges of veterinary medicine in North America, especially those that did not have faculty with formal training in veterinary nutrition. Acquisition of new knowledge by veterinarians and veterinary technicians at colleges of veterinary medicine and veterinary conferences, sponsored by Mark Morris Associates and Hill's Pet Nutrition, helped to change the application of nutrition in veterinary medicine from a cook-book art based largely on empiricism, to a highly sophisticated science built on the foundations of verifiable observations and technology. Currently, veterinary nutrition impacts every phase of the cause, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease. Because of the nutrition courses initiated by Mark Morris Associates, and carried on to this day by Hill's Pet Nutrition, practitioners today are better able to "First Do No Harm."

During the many years of collaboration between the team at the University of Minnesota, the team at Mark Morris Associates, and the team at Hill's Science and Technology Center (led by Mike Hand), we, at the University of Minnesota were never asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. We trusted each other to be guided by ethical principles and moral values. Nor were we ever asked to delay publication of results of our studies in scientific journals until our industrial sponsors first reviewed our findings. There were no discussions or agreements about "trade secrets." The philosophy was consistently to generate and share scientifically accurate information. The atmosphere of trust in each other was championed by Mark Jr. The sources of financial sponsorship of research findings published in scientific journals were formally acknowledged.

Ultimately, the win/win relationship created by the University of Minnesota, Mark Morris Associates, and Hill's Pet Nutrition generated scientific knowledge that continues to serve the veterinary profession and the public by providing improved methods to manage urolithiasis and countless other disorders affecting companion animals. In addition, it proved to have direct educational benefits in terms of providing advanced training and financial support for post-graduate veterinarians pursuing residency training and the Master of Science and/or PhD degrees. It provided direct benefits to veterinarians in private practice who were given new knowledge to improve the quality of care they provided for their patients. The relationship also provided a source of revenue for our industrial sponsors, a portion of which was reinvested in additional university graduate training grants and research protocols.

Since the time of Mark's passing, many of his colleagues and friends have stated that he will be remembered as a caring, and compassionate gentleman. Let us pause and reflect what it means to be a gentleman. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines a gentleman as, "A courteous gracious man... with a strong sense of honor." Roget's Thesaurus provides the following synonyms for gentleman: well mannered, honorable, refined, and... gentle. Let me paraphrase the thoughts that Joseph A. Mancini wrote in an essay entitled "The Order of the True Gentleman."

The true Gentleman is a man whose conduct proceeds from good will and an acute sense of honesty. His self-control is equal to all emergencies. He does not make the poor man conscious of his poverty, the obscure man of his obscurity, or any man of his inferiority or deformity. The true Gentleman is himself humbled if necessity compels him to humble another. He does not flatter wealth, cringe before power, or boast of his own possessions or achievements. The true Gentleman speaks the truth, but always with sincerity and empathy. His deed follows his word, and he is willing to put the rights and feelings of others before his own. He believes in the concept of serving rather than being served. The true Gentleman is a man with whom honor and virtue are sacred.

I will remember Mark as... a true gentleman.

During his lifetime, it has been my observation that Mark demonstrated generous loyalty to the veterinary profession and his alma mater (Cornell University), steadfast loyalty to Hill's Pet Nutrition, and unconditional loyalty to his friends. He was also extremely loyal to his father, Mark L. Morris, Sr., crediting him with many aspects of the amazing success story that we are all recalling at this time. However, I can say that examination of the evidence indicates that the growth of the Morris Animal Foundation and the Science Diet and Prescription Diet brands were catalyzed by Mark Jr. Mark Sr., who conceived of the concept of prescription diets as an integral component of the management of diseases of animals. Mark Jr. and Bob Wheeler, CEO of Hill's Pet Nutrition, provided the leadership underlying the international reputation of Hill's Pet Nutrition.

Mark's loyalty to me encompassed honesty, trustworthiness, and a passion for scientific inquiry. He stood with me in hard times and good times. Loyalty is the natural response to loyalty, which explains why he touched the hearts of so many individuals, including mine. Having him as a loyal friend was a source of great encouragement to me. I am especially grateful for the opportunity to have worked with him as a colleague. It is indeed a great privilege to be able to call him my loyal friend.

Carl A. Osborne, DVM, PhD