

Dr. John L. "Jack" Mara

[Dr. Mara's obituary appeared in the May 1, 2003 issue of JAVMA, as an AVMA Honor Roll Member.]

Dr. Mara (COR '51), 78, Topeka, Kan., died March 27, 2003. A longtime advocate of clinical nutrition research and education for veterinarians, he had a career spanning nearly 50 years, 21 of them with Hill's Pet Nutrition Inc.

Following graduation, Dr. Mara owned a practice in Huntington, N.Y., for 28 years. In 1979, he joined Hill's as a professional services representative for New York, New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania. Dr. Mara was appointed director of veterinary affairs in 1982 and held that position until he retired in 2000.

During his tenure as director, he created and instituted a program to establish a nutrition curriculum in veterinary colleges, and helped establish clinical nutrition as a teaching topic by assisting in the creation of more than 19 graduate/PhD residencies. Dr. Mara was instrumental in establishing the American College of Veterinary Nutrition, and was granted honorary diplomate status in 1994.

Recognizing the value of veterinary technicians, he was a pioneer in forging continuing education opportunities for them. Dr. Mara supported the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America, and was instrumental in aiding in its development as an organization. The AVMA designated the veterinary technician educational program of the AVMA Annual Convention as the Dr. Jack L. Mara Seminars in Veterinary Technology.

He was the guiding force behind the Leo K. Bustad Companion Animal Veterinarian Award. In 1994, AVMA President Leon H. Russel chose Dr. Mara for the President's Award for his efforts to promote professional awareness of the human/animal bond through the Bustad Award.

Dr. Mara served as a trustee of the Morris Animal Foundation and as vice president of its veterinary division. He was awarded life membership by the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society. Dr. Mara was presented with the Western Veterinary Conference Distinguished Service Award in 1988. A World War II veteran, he served in the Army Air Corps as a nose gunner on a B24 bomber, flying on 26 combat missions.

Dr. Mara's four sons and two daughters survive him. Memorials may be made to the Morris Animal Foundation, 45 Inverness Drive E., Englewood, CO 80112; the Cornell University Mara Oncology Fund, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY 14853; or Kansas State University Jack Mara Fund (where the Veterinary Learning Center will be renamed for him), Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine, Manhattan, KS 66506.