(No. 44) -- H.I.S. Death of President Thomsen

Humane Information Services, Inc.
HUMANE INFORMATION SERVICES
MOURNS DEATH OF PRESIDENT THOMSEN

Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, Ph.D., president of Humane Information Services, Inc., and its sister society, the National Association for Humane Legislation, Inc., both headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida, died on April 3 at the age of 79.

"Doc," as he was affectionately known, had been in failing health for some months but had put off a medical checkup because "we have too much work to do." Around the beginning of the year his health worsened. On February 27 he entered the hospital in Washington, D.C., and died on April 3 at the age of 79.

His distinguished career included positions as professor of agricultural marketing at the University of Minnesota and head of several divisions in the United States Department of Agriculture.

He was the author of numerous research publications, journal articles and analyses. Several textbooks published by McGraw-Hill Book Company, including Agricultural Prices (First Edition) and Agricultural Marketing.

For many years Doc was active in animal welfare work and served as a director and officer of local, state and national humane societies, including the Humane Society of the United States. In 1965 he founded Humane Information Services, now recognized as one of the largest national humane societies in this country. In 1970 he incorporated a second organization, for legislative purposes, and served both societies without remuneration.

Those who knew him personally and worked with him have indeed been privileged. His dedication and dedication, his intelligence and integrity, and his patience and indefatigability were a source of wonder and inspiration to all.

Doc was a giant among humanitarians, a very special person. He is sorely missed, but his influence on the humane movement will continue.

Appearing in this issue are just a few of many tributes to Doc for his countless contributions to the relief of animal suffering. It is for these contributions that he would want to be most remembered.
PLANS — FROM PAGE 1

In an issue of Report to Humanitarians:

"In 1963, when we were incorporated, there were numerous other national humane societies of one kind or another. Why did we think one was needed?

"Very simply, we believed that the other societies were not doing, and gave no promise of doing, the kind of job that needed to be done, and in a great void, which we hoped to fill for the benefit of the animals.

"Two energies of the national societies have been directed at correcting the relatively unimportant, inconsequential cases of animal suffering, while the big, important humane problems have been comparatively little neglected. This very marked tendency, which still prevails, arises from a number of factors. The little problems engender comparatively little difficulty, whereas the big problems, involving millions of animals and untold suffering, require more thinking, larger plans and more capable action. The little problems frequently have a greater appeal to animal lovers, many of whom are more impressed with help for individual animals than for large categories of animals. Because of these conditions, the societies have not recognized the importance of setting up priorities for the purpose of redirecting their efforts into more productive channels.

"In trying to redirect the attention of humane organizations and humane leaders from the many minor, inconsequential episodes and issues, toward the big, important humane problems, we have reiterated and will continue to reiterate the basic principle which should establish priorities for the purpose of our humane resources.

"Each source of animal suffering may be ranked according to its importance as based upon three facts: the total number of animals involved, the average amount of suffering per animal, and how much of the total suffering involved. We have been involved over a period of the foreseeable future by the kind of programs the humane movement is capable of conducting. These conditions determine the total amount of animal suffering which it is possible to eliminate by appropriating programs adopted and vigorously pursued. They guide us constantly in our work."

We sincerely hope out many members and friends will continue to support our work during this transition period. Your participation is vital to our success. Please make your support known to us and we will appreciate it. Let us hear from you.

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In Memoriam

The directors, officers and staff of Humane Information Services are deeply grateful for the many cards and letters of condolence, also assurances of continued support from other organizations and others since the death of Dr. Thom sen will want to read a few excerpts from these messages:

"It is with great regret that I learned of the death of Dr. Thom sen, one of the foremost workers for animal welfare in this country. I hope the important animal lovers who you and he carried on over many years will continue. You may be sure of our continued support for the work which he did.

"I am at a loss for words to express my grief. Doc meant so much to so many, and his loss will be felt by all of us for many years to come."


"Dr. Thom sen was a wonderful man—sincere, dedicated and tireless as a worker to solve problems of animal welfare. He was a person whose influence was felt in this area for animal welfare. In a field where near charlatanism rules, the loss of such persons asDoc and Nellie is almost devastating. But we can continue in the paths Doc laid out for us and we will."

--Edward Newman, Woodland Hills, California.

"How thankful we are to have had Doc for so long, and how much suffering he suffered because of his complete dedication to the humane movement.

--Mrs. W. H. Eichelberger, Lake Park, Florida.

"I am shocked and much saddened, for Doc has been a good friend for over 15 years. We will all miss him very much because he had the rare gift of seeing things objectively and not being overly emotional."

--Mrs. James K., President, Defenders of Animal Rights, Baltimore, Maryland.

"I don't have to tell you, I guess—I thought Doc was quite a guy and I will remind him when I see him again."

"Doc Thom sen was truly a completely selfless, sincere and dedicated human being... Richland SPCA members will recall that 60-year-old Doc made a trip to Columbia, December to testify in our behalf at the public hearing on the decompression chamber. He had to come to the hearing because he was an inner ear problem that could not fly."

--Mrs. Fred B. Johnston, II, Columbia South Carolina (excerpts taken from C.J. O. The National SPCA, publication of the Richland SPCA, Columbia, South Carolina).

"I was so very saddened to learn of Doc's death. What a tremendous sorrow for you what a great loss to the whole humane movement that can never be filled!"

--Burton M. Parks, Pinehurst, North Carolina.

"Doc will be sadly missed, but his work will be carried on in remembrance of his concern and effort for animal welfare. He ordered a torch, and we shall carry it.

--Mrs. Thelma C. Dangers, Clifton, Michigan.

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

have been received from:


Ms. Reuben Atkinson, Sarasota, Florida, "as a tribute to Dr. Thom sen. His devotion will be with us forever."

Ms. Betty Billings, Dean, Oregon, "in memory of a wonderful eleven-plus relationship with my beloved black cat Clyde, who crossed the road in front of a speeding car.

Burton M. Parks, Pinehurst, North Carolina, "I'm sure I'll be many times longer."

As, Nanci L. Sailor, Mountain View, California, and Laterna and Glenn Eilzer, Eca, Illinois, "in memory of Artis Sailor, who passed away April 14, 1978. She lived 18 years.

Miss Virginia E. Tcheffic, Menlo Park, California, "in memory of Dr. Thom sen."

Miss Ruby D. Smith, Sarasota, Florida, "in memory of Dr. Thom sen."

Ms. Doris Talisman, Paris, France, "in memory of Renate Tardosy, who helped us," etc.
WHAT MAKES A HUMANITARIAN?

One thing on which Fred and I had great difficulty was the role of the greatest humanitarian of all time. The greatest humanitarian, in our opinion, was the one who made a positive contribution to the improvement of animal welfare. This was the person who understood the needs of animals and worked to meet those needs. Fred was a unique combination of qualities, and he was the greatest humanitarian of all time. He was dedicated to the improvement of animal welfare, and he was also a scholar, political activists, and a philosopher.

Fred was of a similar nature. Neither of us was timid about expressing our opinions on this subject. When we argued, we were always honest and sincere, and we were able to respect each other's viewpoints. When he was a journalist, he held an audience spellbound like a chautauqua speaker. In personal contacts, he charmed potential contacts into adopting humane practices, and he won the hearts of many who had previously been indifferent to the cause.

I was never a man to swallow whole what anyone said or wrote about anything. My potential fat-cat was one who had made me a skeptic. Fred was of a similar nature. Neither of us was timid about expressing our opinions on this subject. When we argued, we were always honest and sincere, and we were able to respect each other's viewpoints. When he was a journalist, he held an audience spellbound like a chautauqua speaker. In personal contacts, he charmed potential contacts into adopting humane practices, and he won the hearts of many who had previously been indifferent to the cause.

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REFLECTIONS — FROM PAGE 3

veterinary services for the sick and injured animals so they could be rehabilitated for adoption, despite the fact that people would pay only what they could afford. Over time the number of dogs and cats turned away at the door, and being slaughtered in the community's other shelters and pounds on the highways. Most of the large-scale kill-shelter and "save-a-life" shelters soon became full to capacity, and additional animals could be accepted only on a "first-come-first-serve" basis and were "adopted out." Some of the animals of an age, appearance or condition making them unattractive to potential adopters were kept on hand for weeks, months and even years. The number of adopters was much smaller than the number of people offering their unwanted pets. The public was caring for a pitiful minute portion of the total surplus production of dogs and cats. Yet their founders, directors and financial backers, who could easily have saved the millions of other dogs and cats they could not care for. Some of the famous people who started these "save-a-life" shelters gloating write-ups in the media, and were popular speakers at humane society and other conventions, were for prevention rather than cure. They were overwhelmed by the financial largess of their admirers, the while other hard-pressed practical shelter animals and human societies were struggling to make ends meet.

PREVENTION THE BEST CURE

In the intervening years more and more people have gradually come to realize that there is a real solution to the problem of the over-pupulation of domestic animals. Prevention is the key word. People have found that what the name implies, rather than acting as if it was not an essential part of the pet animal welfare scene.

In this respect, more and more people, not alone those in the humane movement, have come to realize that the real solution of the problem is to prevent the birth of more animals. Millions of domestic animals can be absorbed by the potential good homes available. This is now the battle cry of every major humane society. Prevention, it is recognized, is the best cure.

SAVE-A-LIFERS' INFLUENCE STILL DOMINATES POLICY

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The reason a lot of effort into making killing more humane when the "real" prob-lem is preventing the need for killing? Why not act on prevention and destruction of shelters and pounds? But the intermediate and longer-run effects would be greater. To prevent the necessity for killing, the number of really good homes available. People, he said, cannot, or want to, act as if the cost of pet ownership is too great, and who and who were financially able, to provide for all of the needs of their animals they could own what the name implies, rather than acting as if it was not an essential part of the pet animal welfare scene.

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