Oliver M. Evans, 69, a founder and former president of The Humane Society of the United States, died on Dec. 16. Mr. Evans, a native of Montclair, N.J., was a director or officer of HSUS throughout its 21-year history. He was serving as treasurer at the time of his death.

A quiet and reserved man, Mr. Evans was a champion of humane treatment for animals and an advocate of better care for the mentally retarded. He served on the board of trustees of St. John's Child Development Center in Washington, D.C., and on the National Capital Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

As a young man, Mr. Evans went west to join his father in the mining business in St. Louis after graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Princeton University. While living in Missouri, he served as president of the Animal Protective Assn. of St. Louis, president of the St. Louis Audobon Society, president of the Edgewood Child Center, St. Louis, and a director of the Missouri League for Humane Progress.

Evans believed the humane movement provided a philosophical answer and positive programs that could help solve social problems and problems of conservation and the environment, as well as problems relating to the welfare of animals. He was convinced that these problem areas were caused in large measure by the general failure of people to accept the moral imperative that would motivate them to be actively kind to all living creatures.

This benevolence was clearly exhibited in 1963 when Mr. Evans became president of HSUS and served until 1967 without remuneration.

His interest in animal welfare extended internationally to the World Federation for the Protection of Animals (WFPA), headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. He was a member of the WFPA, Inc., which is the U.S. arm of that organization.

"He devoted his life to all living creatures," said HSUS President John A. Hoyt upon learning of Evans' death. "Oliver Evans was a dignified, retiring man whose zeal for the welfare of the helpless is difficult to duplicate. His life stands as an indelible reminder for all those who share the reverence for life philosophy."

An example of Evans' lifelong care and concern for the helpless occurred in 1966 when he made a dramatic television presentation to develop support for the care of animals in research facilities. He was accompanied to the broadcasting studio by a mongrel dog he had found wandering in the Georgetown section of Washington, D.C. The dog, with an induced tumor on its head and its vocal cords cut, had obviously escaped from a research laboratory. "Only after 3 months of care did the dog realize that there was such a thing as companionship and play," Evans said. "One of our major complaints is treatment of animals which have had major surgery done and are left in their cages to live or die without proper post-operative care."

Mr. Evans is survived by his wife, Irene Williams Evans, and his son, Sam, a practicing attorney in London, England, and four grandchildren. Contributions in memory of Oliver Evans may be made to The Humane Society of the United States to support prevention of cruelty to animals.

Oliver M. Evans