

Eulogy: Professor Courtney Martin ('Tubby') Veary (21/09/1939 – 12/06/2021)



Courtney Martin Veary, (better known as 'Tubby'), was a major contributor to meat hygiene and veterinary public health in South Africa and a leader in veterinary science. He was born in Johannesburg and as a schoolboy at St John's College, Tubby was very active in sports and won full colours. At Tukkies, he played for the first hockey team while completing his veterinary degree. After qualifying he joined Harlequin Club's Old Croconians and represented Northern Transvaal Masters Hockey as goalkeeper. Hockey remained his chosen sport for most of his life and he was still playing goalie in his sixties (playing his last game for Masters Hockey a month before he turned 70). Tubby thrived on people contact and was a people's person. In addition to being an excellent sportsman, he applied these skills within our profession in terms of commitment and leadership. He was a team player at all times and never stepped back from any challenge.

Tubby Veary qualified BVSc in 1963 and married Annette soon after. They had two children – a son Iain and daughter ElsBeth – sadly, ElsBeth died of cancer a few years ago. Annette died in May 1996, and after being supported by a wonderful lady for nearly 20 years, Tubby remarried four years ago and Ena has been his true comfort and protector during his recent sad decline in health. Ena dealt with some of the hardest times in his life. We salute Tubby, a giant in our profession and thank Ena sincerely for her dedication to our colleague and his family.

In 1964, Tubby joined a small animal practice belonging to Dr Wally Leibenguth in Johannesburg and spent several years in this practice before moving to the practice of Amos and Clow in Durban. In 1969, Annette suffered a stroke and as a result Tubby made a career change that would allow him to assist in caring for her. He left private practice and joined the Durban Corporation where he became the principle veterinary meat hygiene officer at the Durban Abattoir. Later, as state veterinarian and regional meat

hygiene officer while the new abattoir was built at Cato Ridge, he was responsible for establishing this new abattoir. There were significant problems for more than six months, requiring that he and his co-workers spend substantial amounts of time until late at night to fulfil the daily requirements. He followed his BVSc with a Diploma in Veterinary Public Health and later obtained his MMed Vet (Hyg). Tubby devoted himself to ensuring that proper procedures were followed, and he developed a specialist expertise base which has served our profession for many years, including having written the standard lecture notes in meat hygiene for all students at Onderstepoort. His collection of photographs of meat inspection form a significant part of the history of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Faculty. He was one of the first to make a commitment to public health, with a strong focus on meat hygiene in all sectors. He improved abattoir grading and initiated a system of inspection. His actions made him a leader in the promotion of livestock welfare, specifically at abattoirs. He was a research leader in the field of meat hygiene and his publications have been extensively cited. His research grading on Research Gate was extremely high and he was linked internationally with scientists globally.

At the Onderstepoort Veterinary Faculty he became full professor and head of the Department of Veterinary Public Health, and later head of the Department of Animal and Community health in 1997. He made contributions in wildlife farming and harvesting for exports with the Red Meat Abattoir Association. Among his important achievements was the introduction of hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP) and abattoir grading and inspection.

His dedication and attention to detail facilitated the formulation and rewriting of meat hygiene legislation in South Africa, which enabled the country to export internationally and contributed to the national economy.

In addition to his major achievements as an academic and researcher, Tubby was very committed to the veterinary profession. He was involved in the South African Veterinary Association, the SA Veterinary Foundation and the SA Veterinary Council. Tubby was president of SAVA from 1984 to 1986 after fulfilling numerous positions as vice chairman and then chairman of the Natal branch, later the Pretoria branch; he was a member of Wits branch, and chairman of the education committee and constitution committee.

He received the Boswell Award in 1987, was elected Honorary Life Vice-President in 1988, was awarded the Silver Medal in 1990, and received numerous citations. During the time when Tubby was vice president together with Peter Belonje (president), SAVA bought the house that is now Vet House. Tubby Veary was a popular person in any forum, including the Whirling Wheels Paraplegic Club, the Rotary Club, and the Umhlanga Rocks Town Council and Ratepayers Association.

May his soul rest in peace after his labour of love.

*Glynn Catton
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