

Heloise Heyne – 4th recipient of the HH Curson Award

Annette Boshoff, Prof Gareth Bath

Herbert Henry Curson (1892-1968, MRCVS London 1914) was the first veterinarian in South Africa to systematically record items of historical interest for the profession. Among the 175 scientific publications written by Curson are an invaluable series of articles and monographs on the veterinary history of South Africa.

In 1995, the Veterinary History Committee (VHC) of SAVA was established under the chairmanship of Basil Henry Pappin (1924-1998, BVSc Onderstepoort 1946). In 2019, the Veterinary History Society of South Africa (VHS) was registered and replaced the VHC. The Directors of the newly created Veterinary History Society (apart from Rudolph Bigalke, who was a recipient of the first awards in 2020 and was therefore recused from the decision) resolved to confer awards named after Curson on three stalwarts who collectively had created and grown the SAVA VHC to the point where it is today as the VHS. These recipients were Rudolph, Daan Verwoerd and Antonie Snijders (posthumous). The awards were presented during the 44th World Association for the History of Veterinary Medicine Congress held at the Farm Inn in Pretoria from 26 to 29 February 2020.

The Directors of the VHS evaluate candidates for these HH Curson awards on the overall quality and sustained nature of a person's contributions to veterinary history in South Africa. In the case of Heloise Heyne, she was the active and caring Curator of the SA National Veterinary Museum for decades, ensuring the preservation of many historic items including the blackboard in the first student lecture hall dating back to 1908, where she threatened to take a past Director to court for wanting to destroy it. She also consistently tracked down information about people, events and buildings, invaluable for our VHS records and archives. She is one of a dwindling bunch of OP workers who knew several of the giants of the past and can confirm aspects of their activities. The VHS Directors considered her to be a most worthy recipient of the award.



Heloise Heyne with the Award



VHS Chair Gareth Bath and Heloise Heyne

Apart from being the curator of the SA National Veterinary Museum, she was also the curator of the Gertrud Theiler Tick Museum at Onderstepoort and played a valuable part in the upgrading of the National Veterinary Museum in 2008.

Heloise has written a biography of the first South African veterinarian, Jotella Festiri Soga (1865-1906, MRCVS Edinburgh 1886), among many other publications of historic value.

She has delivered presentations on veterinary history at several conferences, including talks on parasitologists of note at the World Association for the History of Veterinary Medicine Congress in 2020 and the buildings of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Institute at the 39th World Veterinary Association Congress 2024 in Cape Town.

In 2015, Heloise was elected as an Honorary Associate Life Member of SAVA for her outstanding service to veterinary science in South Africa. She spent her entire career as a veterinary technologist at The Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Institute and worked with Gertrud Theiler and Ivan Horak among many other renowned scientists. Her main field of expertise is the taxonomy of ticks and parasitic mites.

She retired as a Senior Research Technician with about 40 scientific articles in leading journals. Her status as an internationally recognised tick expert led to the co-authorship of a textbook: *The Ixodid Ticks (Acari: Ixodidae) of Southern Africa* (Horak et al. 2018).

Heloise also lectured at the Tshwane University of Technology and at the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort. Heloise's contribution to veterinary science internationally and to the veterinary history of South Africa is truly outstanding.

Read more about the contribution of HH Curson at:

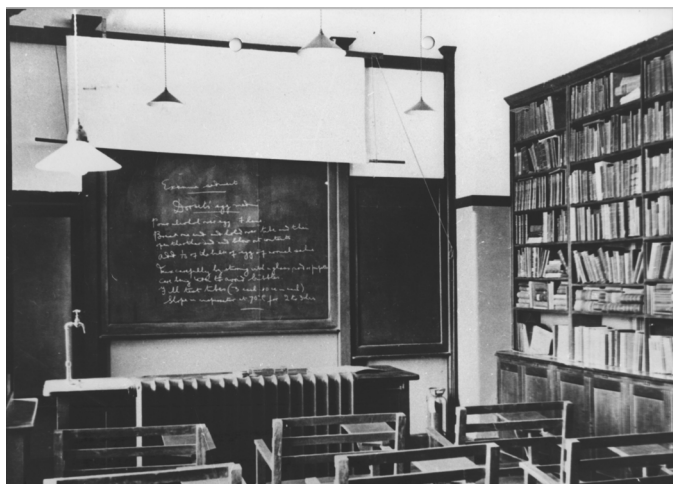
https://journals.co.za/doi/epdf/10.10520/AJA00382809_4312

Read more about the contribution of BH Pappin at:

https://journals.co.za/doi/epdf/10.10520/AJA00382809_3586



Read more about the contribution of Heloise Heyne in the VetNews of September 2015: <https://www.sava.co.za/vetnews-2015/>



Heloise Heyne prevented the destruction of the blackboard in the first lecture hall and library at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Institute c. 1923.



South African National Veterinary Museum in the 'Old Hostel' at Onderstepoort.



Rudolph Bigalke and Heloise Heyne in front of the SA National Veterinary Museum in 2008.