



A veterinarian of the old school

Michael Edwin Averill (Mike) Cartridge (1936–2017) BVSc (Sydney)

THESE DAYS WE see the ageing and passing of veterinary clinicians who were very different from many of today's more specialised clinicians. They had skills and interest in all species, tended to stay in one place for most of their professional careers and were – and still are, in many instances – leaders in their communities. Many of them also led the profession in various ways.

Mike Cartridge, who died in Nelson on 16 August, aged 81, was one of these.

He was a child of the vicarage in Waimate, attended Christ's College in Christchurch, was awarded a Veterinary Services Council Bursary to study veterinary science at the University of Sydney, and graduated with a Bachelor of Veterinary Science in 1959.

He worked at the Waimate Farmers Veterinary Club from 1959 to 1963. While there, he developed the wide-ranging skills that he and David Wood took to North Canterbury when they established their practice of Cartridge and Wood, taking over the practice run by Neil Bruere in Waikari and building a new clinic in Cheviot.

This was a true mixed practice, located in a dryland farming area, with the associated mix of species. The development of large-scale irrigation in the 1990s resulted in major dairy expansion, and the practice also expanded to become North Canterbury Veterinary Clinics, with four clinics and many more veterinarians and support staff. The business is proud to have

maintained a local emphasis and to support local activities.

From the 1970s the practice became a starting place for many new graduates. It offered a solid grounding in a diverse mix of veterinary experiences. Mike was very tolerant of green veterinary graduates, and shared his knowledge and experience with all, fostering their confidence. The opportunity to try new things was encouraged.

Mike had a passion for dryland livestock performance. During his time, he saw the introduction of exotic cattle, the development of deer farming, the establishment of angora goat farming and the importation and expansion of new sheep breeds.

He became an enthusiast for the Texel breed, and established a stud of his own. At the same time, a reputation for being "pretty good with working dogs" was evident. The dairy expansion provided a new endeavour to embrace.

New technologies were a fascination for Mike, who was quick to see the potential of fax machines, photocopiers, a 'brick' cell phone, computerised recording systems and the ultrasound scanner.

He was part of the group of veterinarians involved in establishing a cooperative and collegial relationship with other veterinary practices in the northern South Island. Now known as The Vet Company, this relationship is still going strong after 25 years, and serves as a genuine model for business cooperation.



Mike served on the council of the NZVA in the 1970s, and as president in 1977, while actively developing the veterinary practice.

He was awarded membership of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists for his contribution to veterinary science in New Zealand. He was also a Justice of the Peace and active in a range of community roles.

Mike retired from the practice in the late 1990s, and worked in various roles, including a stint in the Falkland Islands and part-time veterinary work for MPI in Nelson. He and his wife, Valda, and their children, Sally, Wendy, Douglas and Jane, were a true veterinary family and made a significant impact on their community. 🐾