

MARGARET SLOSS BY ROSALIE CUSHMAN

“I hope you will set your goal just a little bit higher and then put forth a real effort to attain or surpass it. Do a little each day toward your goal. Most people never get to their objective for the simple reason they quit too soon.” - Margaret Sloss

“Two ears and one mouth suggests that you should listen twice as much as you talk.” - Author unknown, Margaret Sloss

“May the time come when the world will recognize, and accept in a taken-for-granted sort of way, that it is as universally true of women as it is true of men, that regardless of their natural gifts and talents, of their chosen field of interest, or of the triviality or the enormity of their contributions in that field of interest; regardless of all these things and the many others that are too often charged to be differentiating characteristics, all are fundamentally, and primarily, only human at heart.” - Margaret Sloss

In our most recent history it has become almost ordinary and essentially accepted for talented and energetic women to work in what were previously considered “all-male domains” and occupations. In fact, there are few of them left in our modern world. Women have pursued careers in medicine, space, the physical sciences, research, advertising, business, and politics; the list is endless. Modern women, however, could never have entered those once non-traditional arenas had it not been for the fundamental groundwork laid by their strong and courageous predecessors.

One such predecessor for women at Iowa State University was Margaret Wragg Sloss. She literally helped shape ISU’s College of Veterinary Medicine’s admission policy by becoming the first woman to be admitted to, and graduate from, that college. After receiving her Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree, she remained on the staff as a teaching veterinarian in pathology. Her scientific contributions in this realm are certainly worth noting as they are, indeed, impressive. Yet it was Margaret Sloss’s human qualities, her motivations, natural curiosity, perseverance, forthright temperament, and above all, her sustaining sense of humanity, that enabled her to achieve her highest goals in an era filled with latent (and often, blatant) prejudices against women in science.

The era Margaret Sloss’s roots originated in were the early 1900s. A description of those roots helps to draw a picture of the environment which helped shape her personality. Consequently, an introduction to Margaret’s early life is certainly in order.

Margaret Wragg Sloss was born into a close-knit family in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1901. It was a large family of five girls and three boys. Her parents were first generation Scottish-Americans who valued hard work, education, discipline and moral values. In 1910, Margaret’s father, Thomas, accepted the job of superintendent of buildings, grounds and construction at Iowa State College. One important motivation for his taking this position was that it would enable him to educate his children more easily. So the Sloss family packed up and moved to Ames. They lived on campus (which was not uncommon for staff people at the time) in a big two-story house located near Pammel Drive, right across the street from the veterinary clinic.

It is from this early environment that Margaret’s perceptions certainly must have been molded. All early accounts of her depict a child with a voracious curiosity, an adventurous spirit, and a gregariousness that all who knew her seemed to notice. One of her younger sisters recalls the children going to the veteri-

nary clinic to watch the doctors operating on the animals. Midway through the operation all the other children would leave, but not Margaret.; She would stay until the very end.¹ In an interview with Margaret in her later years she describes the impact the “campus kids” (as they were often called) experience had on her life:

There weren't many children on campus for me to play with; about my only friends were students and people connected in some way with the college. So I was exposed from an early age to science and learning...The veterinary clinic was the first building my father had anything to do with constructing. We lived right across the street, so I played over there most of the time...One of my favorite people then was old Dad Gray, caretaker at the clinic. He was a tolerant old fellow and I used to tag [along with] him for hours. He even let me ride along on calls occasionally.²

Margaret was not “all business”, however. She tempered these seemingly serious scientific exercises with a rich variety of other activities and escapades. The “campus kids” literally had the run of the campus, so they played on nearly all of the grounds and in many of the buildings. An early playmate of Margaret's remembers them romping through the museum in Morrill Hall, crawling through the underground tunnel from Curtiss to Morrill, and sliding down a mail chute at the back of Curtiss Hall! In one particular incident, Margaret apparently got gutsy and opened the door to climb the stairway leading to the dome in Beardshear.³ She didn't hesitate for a second; up she went. It is unlikely some of these activities were permissible, but Margaret evidently was not bothered by such things and filled her days with this mischief.

(To diverge a bit: Somewhere along the way, Margaret picked up a nickname. “Toot”, as she was affectionately called, originated sometime in her early childhood. Even her youngest sister is not sure why that name stuck with Margaret. It is likely, however, that it was given to her by older family members. She was the third youngest of the eight children and, beginning with her, the last three children were the only ones who apparently had lasting nicknames).

Margaret was also a student. She attended Welsh School near the campus until she reached high school and went downtown. She consistently did well in school even with her handicap of poor eyesight. She evidently needed glasses at a very early age and usually sat in the front row so she could see better.

Notably, it is Margaret's social personality and her sense of humor which really began “to shine” during this period of her life. In her senior year, along with several others, Margaret formed a club called the Aeta Beta Pi's, a fictitious name to be sure. It is unclear exactly what the girls did in this club, but evidently they would meet socially, generally maintaining a spirit of closeness and camaraderie.

Similarly, Margaret apparently enjoyed being the center of attention from time to time. Certainly when she was, she focused that attention on her humor. One classmate recalls Margaret mimicking a teacher, Miss Ball, walking down the hall with the gang of them laughing hysterically, fueling Margaret's performance. She inadvertently “got caught”, however, as Miss Ball came up behind her. Margaret maintained a cool head, impressively enough, and walked on as if nothing had happened.⁴

In 1919, Margaret graduated from Ames High School and, in the same year, began attending Iowa State College. She did not continue the same closeness with some of her old chums, but did keep in contact. Nevertheless, she did remain quite social by joining a sorority, Alpha Delta Pi. She also significantly matured, channeling her youthful playfulness into more structured activities of drama and athletics, hence

becoming more purposeful during this time in her life. In addition, she was involved in a number of clubs. In the dramatic field, Margaret expressed herself creatively by acting in several plays and directing another. Importantly, Margaret's seeds of appreciation for the dramatic arts germinated and took root during her college years, and she subsequently maintained a strong interest throughout her life in this area. On a number of occasions as an adult, Margaret made the trip to Minneapolis to see the Guthrie Theater perform.⁵

Significantly, however, it was sports that seemed to "light the fire" in Margaret's personality. To say she was enthusiastic is an understatement. And, she was not only quite active in several sports programs, but she also excelled in what she participated in. She earned two letters apiece (the letter "A" at that time) in field hockey, tennis and basketball. She also earned a sports blanket and pins. She appropriately appears in the team pictures in several of the Iowa State annuals, the Bomb.

Whereas Margaret was an active sports participant in her collegiate days, she became a passionate spectator after her graduation. Even as a veterinarian, it seems that sports were a vital and competitive stimulant for her always eager and vibrant personality. In the main, it seems only fair to assume that it was a fundamental part of Margaret's identity and how she expressed herself. Friends remember going to many sporting activities with her; Margaret herself recalls a trip with a classmate to the Cotton Bowl.⁶ In addition, she enjoyed watching sporting events on television. She would call friends after watching a basketball game or tennis match and discuss the plays. And, of course, Margaret loved them all. Almost no sport escaped her scrutiny and attention.

But, above all, Margaret was always the serious student. Whereas her life was richly balanced with her appetite for social activities and sports, she never lost sight of her desires to do well in school. She consistently possessed that deep curiosity for science and learning that she had developed on campus as a child. It was almost as if there were two distinctive parts to Margaret's spirit: the physical and social side, coupled with the keen, intelligent mind. Intellectually, she worked hard to develop and enhance her own natural abilities. She learned discipline from her father and incorporated it into her life as an adult. Biology notebooks of hers from 1920 and 1921 reflect a meticulous and diligent note-taker with amazingly few "doodles" in the margins for a young student. This woman meant business when she studied. Needless to say, her diligence was rewarded in her later accomplishments.

Margaret Sloss received her bachelor's degree in Zoology in 1923. In the same year, E.A. Benbrook hired her as a technician in the pathology laboratory of the College of Veterinary Medicine. She was probably the first woman to hold this position or, at the very least, one of the first few. During this tenure, she petitioned to take a physics course (a prerequisite for medical school at Iowa City), promising to make up time missed from her job. She was denied permission on the grounds that it might "set a precedent." But the tenacious and persistent Margaret could not give up that easily. Somehow, she worked it out and ended up taking the course.

In 1925, Margaret resigned from her position as a technician in order to attend medical school at the University of Iowa. The scientific Margaret had designs on becoming a doctor. Needless to say, in 1925 this "design" was unusual for a woman, to say the least. Evidently, Margaret did quite well there, yet ran into difficulties. She returned in 1926 to her old technician position, abandoning her hopes of becoming a human doctor. There is some discrepancy as to why she returned. She might have decided it wasn't quite the right field for her. Some sources have suggested that the strain was too great on her less-than-perfect eyesight. Others have implied that she met with great resistance and much discouragement because she

was a woman. It is quite probable that the latter is the more plausible reason for her returning to Ames, especially considering the fact that her eyesight seemed to be no barrier in her becoming a veterinarian (or even working as a technician in a laboratory, looking through a microscope).

Her resilient nature presided, however, and whatever the reason for leaving Iowa City, she returned with persistence to her old position in Ames, doubling her meager salary to 70 cents per hour. She held this position until 1929, when she was promoted to an assistant in veterinary pathology. Concurrently Margaret began working on her master's degree. It seems she was not completely satisfied with her current position and her scientific appetite was not yet satiated. She received her master's degree in veterinary anatomy in 1932, and, upon receiving this degree, still was not through educating herself. She applied for admission to the College of Veterinary Medicine.

It is at this juncture that Margaret's persevering personality begs to be noticed, for she definitely ran into problems. Initially, the College denied her admission. No woman had ever been admitted before, and it is obvious that they had no (voluntary) intention of admitting Margaret. But she was forthright, persistent and, most importantly, she did her research! Iowa State, being a land-grant college, was subject to certain federal regulations. Margaret investigated and presented the "fine print" to admissions as she relates in an interview noting that first of all, nobody had bothered to read the document which granted land for the school... A condition in the grant stated that persons applying for admission from Iowa could not be refused on the basis of sex.⁷

She was not to be kept out! Her competitive spirit transcended sports and encouraged her educational endeavors. Becoming a veterinarian was obviously important enough for Margaret for her to fight for her right to be one. Importantly, her strong will, in conjunction with her keen awareness that she was breaking previously untested barriers, fed Margaret's soul. Courage, persistence, and patience are good qualities for people to possess. Margaret necessarily, yet easily, "lived" these qualities in an era of overt discrimination against women breaking into an all-male field of study. (She could do no other.) This perception of her is verified repeatedly by all who knew her well and worked with her. A colleague described Margaret as not only being acutely aware of breaking barriers but, maybe more importantly, feeling the necessity to break them.⁸ She was purposeful, determined. She knew she had the opportunity, and there was never any question of her capability. Unlike the Iowa City experience, Margaret was on her "own turf." She had grown up on the campus in which she knew well the people in charge; she knew who to talk to. She had a strong, sharp mind and a solid educational background to rely on. To be sure, all these ingredients provided Margaret a unique opportunity that none before her had had and she took advantage of it. (Dean Stange was evidently influential in encouraging Margaret to get her DVM degree. It is equally evident that he was a very small minority, as most people in veterinary medicine discouraged her).

Indicative of Margaret's drive to get her DVM degree were some quotes that were found in her affects after her death. Interestingly, she had a curious habit of collecting a variety of quotes and recording them. A couple of these certainly are reflective of her philosophy during this time as she notes, "Don't sit down in the meadow and wait for the cow to back up and be milked; go after the cow!" and "After saying our prayers, we ought to do something to make them come true."⁹

Margaret got her foot in the door, but she was not free of snide comments and continuing discouragement from some "corners" of the college. She continued with her position as pathology assistant in the laboratory all the time she worked on her DVM. Yet, the course of her DVM education was atypical. She

did attend some regular classes. In contrast, however, she was instructed in other areas in a tutorial manner. She also was not always asked to do some procedures that her male counterparts were required to do. It is likely this caused resentment on some students' behalves. Unfortunately, her preferential treatment was not of her own making and, in a 1945 paper she authored for women veterinarians, she complained of this unfair practice in educating women in the field. At that time, "half of the veterinary college bar[red] their women students from certain courses."¹⁰

Ironically, too, Margaret had been working in the pathology clinic laboratory since 1923, so she actually helped fellow students in slide and tissue preparations, histotechnology, and parasitology. Whether some of these students felt Margaret had an unfair advantage in this area is unclear, but it is certainly possible.

The year after Margaret was admitted to the College of Veterinary Medicine, another woman, Lois Calhoun, joined the ranks. Like Margaret, she also worked in the pathology clinic laboratory. Apparently, she and "Maggie" (as some began calling her) became good friends and were quite supportive of each other's ambitions. Lois Calhoun received her DVM degree a year after Margaret and remained on the staff in the lab for a few years, leaving ISU in the early 1940s. With her departure, Margaret became the single "representative" woman on the staff for nearly 20 years. There was not another woman admitted to the College as a student for ten years after Margaret had gained admission.

While Maggie was very much the student and technician, she still had a personal life. When she returned from Iowa City in 1926, she came home to live with her parents in a second Sloss house by Curtiss Hall. Most of her brothers and sisters had been educated by this time and were married and gone from home. In fact, six of the eight children attended Iowa State, with one going to Drake University in Des Moines. It seems Tom Sloss's intentions to educate his children had been fulfilled.

Unlike the other eight children, Margaret was the only one who never married. In a recent interview, Martha Sloss Howard (Margaret's youngest sister) suggested that "Margaret didn't think she could have both a career and marriage." She opted for the career, contending that "the only marriage she would consider would be to a rich, old man with one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel."¹¹

Margaret evidently did have at least one and possibly two romantic relationships with men in her life. When she was a senior in high school she dated one young fellow. It is uncertain as to how serious this relationship was or why it ended. It has also been suggested by several sources that she saw an awful lot of a colleague of hers during some of her professional years. The depth and ending of this relationship is equally uncertain. Whether she had any more involvements of this nature is unknown.

It is nebulous how Margaret felt about never marrying. She did, however, fully value her independence, knowing well she did not need a man to dominate her life. She was in control of it just fine herself. She certainly had many friends and an extremely full and satisfying life in most all other respects. A friend and colleague of hers described a joke Margaret told once at the beginning of a speech she made to a women's group, which might have been indicative of her thoughts: "In my younger days I could have had any man I pleased—the trouble was, I could never please any."¹² While certainly representative of Margaret's delicious sense of humor, the tone of this joke seems to also strike a note of sadness and regret.

In 1937, Margaret's father died. She left the campus and bought a small house on Lincoln Way, which she shared with her mother until her mother's death in 1950. Many friends have described Margaret

as being quite devoted to her mother and also as having strong family ties and a sense of responsibility. Her sister, Martha, even described Toot as becoming the “spokesman for the family after Dad died.”¹³

Whatever Margaret’s personal life might have meant to her, her professional life was about to assume the significance she had worked so hard to attain. In 1938, she made Iowa history and became the first woman to receive her DVM degree from Iowa State University. A number of newspaper articles describe her achievement as “the last ‘men-only’ tradition in Iowa State College; its divisional curricula was broken Saturday—broken by Margaret W. Sloss.”¹⁴ Ironically, when asked about her accomplishment, she was quoted in several papers as humbly saying, “It was really nothing at all.”

Similarly, in a letter to Charles Paul May in later years, she notes that “perhaps neither one of us (she included Lois Calhoun) is a very good judge of how prejudiced people were as far as women in the profession is concerned. We went on the assumption that we were medically and scientifically minded and would rather be in veterinary medicine than in human medicine.”¹⁵

It was almost as if Margaret ignored the prejudices and difficulties, proceeding with her life in spite of them. She notes in a later interview that “if the boys in any of my classes ever gave me any trouble, I gave it right back to them.”¹⁶

Margaret’s professional abilities are, indeed, impressive. Yet, recognition through promotions was not reflective of them. After receiving her DVM, she remained in the pathology laboratory doing much the same work she had done in the past. Teaching was included in her new duties, however, and in 1941, she was promoted to the “instructor” position. In 1943, she became an assistant professor, but it wasn’t until 1958, when Frank Ramsey became head of the pathology department, that she reached the associate professor level. In 1965, she finally became a full professor at the age of 64!

Yet, Margaret was extremely capable. Colleagues repeatedly described her as very skilled in many of the procedures in histologic techniques and parasitology; she was considered “extremely gifted” in stain preparation. She had a keen eye for detail, accuracy, and clarity. She was efficient, hard-working, helpful to others, and well-organized. Her contributions in her profession are unquestionable. She authored or co-authored numerous articles and books, some of which are still used today. (See Appendix)

Her expertise was even utilized beyond the confines of the College of Veterinary Medicine. Doctors at the clinic and hospital required her laboratory services before they had their own pathology lab and, in her helpful way, she provided it for them. In addition, she also did lab work for the Ames sanitation department when there were general health concerns in town.¹⁷

In another vein, Margaret did receive national recognition from two sources in her early years as a veterinarian. In 1940, she was invited by Carrie Chapman Catt to be a delegate at the annual Women’s Centennial Congress in New York City. She was listed “as one of the 100 women in the United States who, in 1940, have successfully followed careers unheard of [for women] 100 years ago.”¹⁸ And, in 1944, she was invited to attend a luncheon honoring women in science, given by Eleanor Roosevelt at the White House. Unfortunately, Margaret did not attend the Women’s Centennial Congress in New York and, as far as it can be determined, did not go to the White House either. The reasons for missing these events is unclear, although some have suggested she was not given time off from her duties to do so. She did, however, feel honored to be recognized.

The 1940s and 1950s were productive years for Margaret Sloss, both professionally and socially. (See Appendix.) She single-handedly designed and taught a class for wives of senior veterinary students. The class was structured to teach them general laboratory procedures and slide and tissue preparations. Margaret taught this class on her own time with no additional pay for approximately eight years.

While Margaret seemingly ignored prejudices directed at her during her student days, she did not always maintain such a generous attitude later in her career. She did develop a deep, philosophical belief that women should have equal opportunities with men, particularly in career choice. Ironically, she did not consider herself a “suffragette”, yet she diligently, persistently and passionately implemented her philosophy in her daily life.

One area in which her beliefs were translated into action was in promoting women admissions into the College of Veterinary Medicine. She believed women should compete equally with men on their grade point merit to gain admission. To the end, she worked a number of years and was eventually successful in influencing Iowa State to adopt this policy.

While Margaret made an important impact on female entrance requirements at ISU, she made an equally significant and lasting contribution to women nationally in this area. In 1947, she helped found the Women’s Veterinary Association, and served two terms as its president. It is through her work with and for women that Margaret’s strong sense of feminine values expresses itself. She published several articles in which she both encourages and defends women in science in general, and the veterinary profession in particular. (See Appendix.) She believed that women had a definite role to play in veterinary medicine. Her sensitivity on this issue is consistently in the forefront of several of her speeches and articles concerning why women are so persistently asked the reason for their choosing such a profession. In *Women in the Veterinary Profession*, she begins with:

Does one have to have a reason for taking the course that seems logical to everyone, simply because they belong to the female sex? Are men veterinarians plied with this question as constantly as women? It seems as illogical to ask a woman...as it would be to ask a man why he took up dancing, singing, costume design, or any number of other things as a profession.¹⁹

In this article, as well as others, she simply defines the reason women choose the veterinary profession as being a natural expression of their interest in animals, coupled with their medical and scientific inclinations intellectually.

It is perhaps, however, in Margaret’s extensive article “Science and Women” that she so tersely relates her most bitter resentment concerning the prejudices and obstacles women faced in the male-dominated arena of science. She begins with:

And what man wouldn’t bitterly resent being automatically classed as a “queer” by all his fellow men simply because he practiced the profession of law or medicine? Or being considered by family, friends, and strangers alike as a “freak” because he was primarily interested in research work... Or being considered as unnatural, unmanly, because he was sincerely and deeply interested in the business world, and proved himself to be successful.²⁰

It is evident that Margaret keenly felt hurt by the unfair and derogatory prejudices directed against women in science. She bitterly resented the stereotypical descriptions leveled against them. In the above

quote, she goes on to describe scientific women being viewed as queer, unnatural, mannish and freaks. She continues the article by defending women in science, labeling those accusations as “unjust”, contending that “we’re no more and no less peculiar than the men... in fields of scientific interest.”²¹ She notes the medical history women have shared even as far back as “healing goddesses in greek mythology.” And much of her paper develops a more recent history of women pioneers in the fields of biology, chemistry, human medicine, and research.

In the end, her resilient and tenacious character reveals itself, as she says, “It seems to be that there really is no solution except patient and persistent fighting on the pioneering women veterinarians through future years.”²²

It is important to note her use of the word pioneer. She uses it in a number of places in describing early women in the sciences. She clearly believed, and accurately perceived, her own role (as well as others), as being an innovator and “early settler” in the veterinary profession. In addition, while the above attitude is terse, she rarely seemed to be this direct with her feelings on the matter with colleagues at Iowa State. Rather, she was selective with whom she shared these feelings. In a more general way, she believed that some at Veterinary Medicine were definitely not leaders in social progress!

In sum, however, Margaret believed and worked for equal opportunities for women. She channelled her energies in this regard in the area she knew best: science. Most importantly, she practiced her beliefs in an era that was often less than supportive of women “breaking barriers.” And while she necessarily felt an expected resentment directed at those who discriminated against her, Margaret, nevertheless, seemed to gain an inordinate amount of strength, courage, and even humor from the situation. Several of her “infamous” scraps of paper she left behind lend credence to this, as she notes, “by the time a young man knows his ABC’s, a young woman knows her XYZ’s” and “victories that are easy are cheap—[only] those [that are] worth having [are those] which come as the result of hard fighting.”²³

In contrast to Margaret’s professional life was her social life. While she was animated, humorous and lively “on the job”, she tempered these qualities with seriousness and professionalism. After five pm, however, she was robust! It has been suggested that she “played as hard as she worked”; that at the end of the day, very few people beat her out the door. She could even be irritable if some last minute problem delayed her exit!²⁴ She seemed to collect quite a number of friends (although she limited close friends to a much smaller number). She went to plays and sporting events with them, and also enjoyed a good game of bridge. She was active in honorary sororities and fraternities, holding offices at one time or another in practically everything she belonged to. (See Appendix.)

And Margaret’s family life was important to her. She loved children and was close to several sisters, nieces and nephews, corresponding with them and visiting when she could. She even helped a few of her nieces and nephews through college, both financially and with encouragement. It seems that Margaret’s early family roots as a child remained solidly in place and were cultivated throughout her adult life.

On balance, Margaret’s social life, in which her friends and family were a vital ingredient, complimented her professional life. She liked to be with people and liked to do things for them. She was generous and kind to the ones she liked, yet always fair and polite to the ones that were not her favorites. Within her relationships, she was forthright, opinionated. It has been suggested, however, that in several of Margaret’s closest relationships she might not have been so assertive, and even seemed to be dominated by one long-time friend of hers. (But apparently she tired of this relationship, and ended the friendship.) In

the main, Margaret was certainly a social creature. Friends and family were essential ingredients that contributed to her already warm, yet strong, personality.

But above all, Margaret Sloss was humorous. She had a story or joke for every situation, rarely repeating them. Christopher Fry once described comedy as an escape, not from the truth, but from despair: a narrow escape into faith. It believes in a universal cause for delight...²⁵ Margaret not only had an enormous amount of faith, both in herself and others but, more importantly, in that “delight” which sustains and encourages us all. While her accomplishments in her work as a veterinarian and a supporter of women in the field are a fundamental part of her character, it seems her ability to relate a story and tell a tale had a more lasting impact on those who knew her. Margaret possessed that rare gift of wit and delighted in it. (Several sources firmly believed she enjoyed her own humor as richly as the listener.) She had the unique ability to take both ordinary events and more serious issues of the day and glean humor out of them for learning and pleasure. She truly believed “you don’t have to be dull to be sincere.”²⁶

Because of her humorous vein, she was a popular speaker at a variety of groups and functions. Her speeches, on record, all begin with a joke. During the Bicentennial, she gave a large number of them and, at one speech she gave to a fourth grade class, a child asked her why she hadn’t become a stand-up comic.²⁷ It seems her friends, family, colleagues, and students were all touched by that part of Margaret that thrived on laughter and delighted in a smile. It quite literally permeated her life.

In sum, Margaret had talent—talent that she worked hard to develop. She had a talent for intellectual pursuits, humor, organization, and public speaking. She also enjoyed working with her hands, gardening, cooking and wood chip carving. To be sure, everything she did, she did well. For a number of years she even balanced her life with an active membership at Collegiate Presbyterian Church (which her father helped found in their living room).

In the end, Margaret Sloss was appreciated by nearly all. Upon her retirement, friends, family, and colleagues gave her a This Is Your Life banquet at the Memorial Union. Amazingly, she received over 500 letters of appreciation and affection from former students and friends who could not attend. And after her retirement, she remained active giving speeches, doing volunteer work, and working on her hobbies.

Margaret Sloss can best be described as vibrant. She naturally possessed an intellectual and scientific curiosity which she felt her responsibility to encourage and develop. In doing so, she became the first woman veterinarian to graduate from Iowa State University. Her contributions in Veterinary Medicine are unquestionable, for she was considered by many to be an excellent and respected pathologist at the height of her career.

More importantly, however, she opened doors for women. By her purposeful and persistent nature, Margaret appreciably contributed to the changing of admission policies for female veterinary students. On a national level, her sense of vision encouraged women to fight for their inherent place in science through the Women’s Veterinary Medical Association. She was fundamentally “a living demonstration of that seemingly inexplicable mystery that sex and gender are not synonymous.”²⁸ To this end she fought and will remain an inspiration for all women at ISU who have the courage and ability to become all they can be, regardless of barriers to their gender. Margaret Sloss was, indeed, a pioneer in this regard. To be sure, men and women alike owe her a debt for sharing with Iowa State her vision of equality for all in an era when progress was slow and, more often than not, less than appreciated.

Endnotes

1. Martha (Sloss) Howard, personal interview, April 25, 1985.
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3. Edith Sunderland, personal interview, April 4, 1985.
4. Ibid.
5. Mary Speak, personal interview, April 10, 1985.
6. Margaret Sloss, personal letter to Lois Calhoun, 1972.
7. Margaret Sloss, Interview - Ames Daily Tribune, Iowa State University Archives.
8. Dr. William Switzer, personal interview, April 11, 1985.
9. Margaret Sloss, ISU Archives.
10. Margaret Sloss, "Science And Women," ISU Archives (1945).
11. Martha Howard, Interview, April 25, 1985.
12. Dr. Mack Emmerson, Interview April 25, 1985.
13. Martha Howard, Interview, April 25, 1985.
14. "First Woman", Des Moines Tribune, August 27, 1938.
15. Margaret Sloss, Personal Letter Charles Paul May, February 8, 1963.
16. Ames Daily Tribune, ISU Archives.
17. Austin Getz, Interview, April 15, 1985.
18. "High Honor Accorded To Dr. Sloss", Newspaper, Unknown, ISU Archives (December 3, 1940).
19. "Women In The Veterinary Profession", The Southwestern Veterinarian, Vol. 5, #4, 1952.
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21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
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26. Margaret Sloss, Notes, ISU Archives.
27. Harriet McJimsey, personal interview, April 9, 1985.
28. Henry C. Howard, letter of May 11, 1985.

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9. "This Is Your Life Dr. Sloss- Our Queen", Ramsey Frank D., May 21, 1972
10. News of Iowa State, July/August, 1967
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17. "Comedy", Christopher Fry. Comedy: A Critical Anthology, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1971
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Appendix

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Honorary and Professional Societies

Honors & Honorary Societies

Mortar Board

Phi Kappa Phi

Phi Zeta

Alpha Lambda Delta

National Collegiate Players

American Men of Science

Who's Who In American Women

One of One Hundred Women Honored by the Women's Centennial Congress

Faculty Citation from Iowa State University Alumni

Alumni Merit Award

Stange Award

Professional & Scientific Societies

American Veterinary Medical Association

Women's Veterinary Medical Association

Iowa Veterinary Medical Association

American Association of Veterinary Parasitologists

American Society of Veterinary Clinical Pathologists

Sigma Delta Epsilon

Nu Sigma Phi

Elective Offices in Professional & Scientific Societies

Secretary-Treasurer of Iowa State University Veterinary Medical Alumni Association -Two 2-year terms

National President of Women's Veterinary Medical Association - 2 terms

National President of Sigma Delta Epsilon

Held All The Offices in the Local Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi at Various Times

Held All The Offices in the Local Chapter Phi Zeta

Committees & Similar Academic Activities

Secretary of Curriculum Committee for the College of Veterinary Medicine

Secretary of the Academic Standards Committee for Nine Years

Honors and Awards Committee for the College of Veterinary Medicine

Advisor to the Auxiliary of the Student Chapter for the A.V.M.A.

Senior Advisor for Local Chapter of Mortar Board

Major Talks at State, National or International Veterinary Medical Association

Meetings and at Regional, National, and International Scientific Meetings

a. Organized classes for wives of Veterinary senior students

b. Auxilixary A.V.M.A. - Talk

c. Installed Chapter of Sigma Delta Epsilon at the University of Minnesota and gave the address

d. Dallas County Public Health Association - Talk

e. Nevada, Iowa Lion's Club - Talk

f. Story County Medical Technologists - Talk

g. Aided in the formation of American Society of Veterinary Clinical Pathologists National A.V.M.A.

h. Great Lakes District of American Medical Technologists - Talk

i. Fifteen years acted as Chair of the Scholarship Committee for the Women's Veterinary Medical Asso-

ciation

j. 1972 College of Veterinary Medicine Address

k. Numerous speeches during the American Bicentennial

Note: Permission granted by Rosalie Cushman to reprint her essay in this booklet.